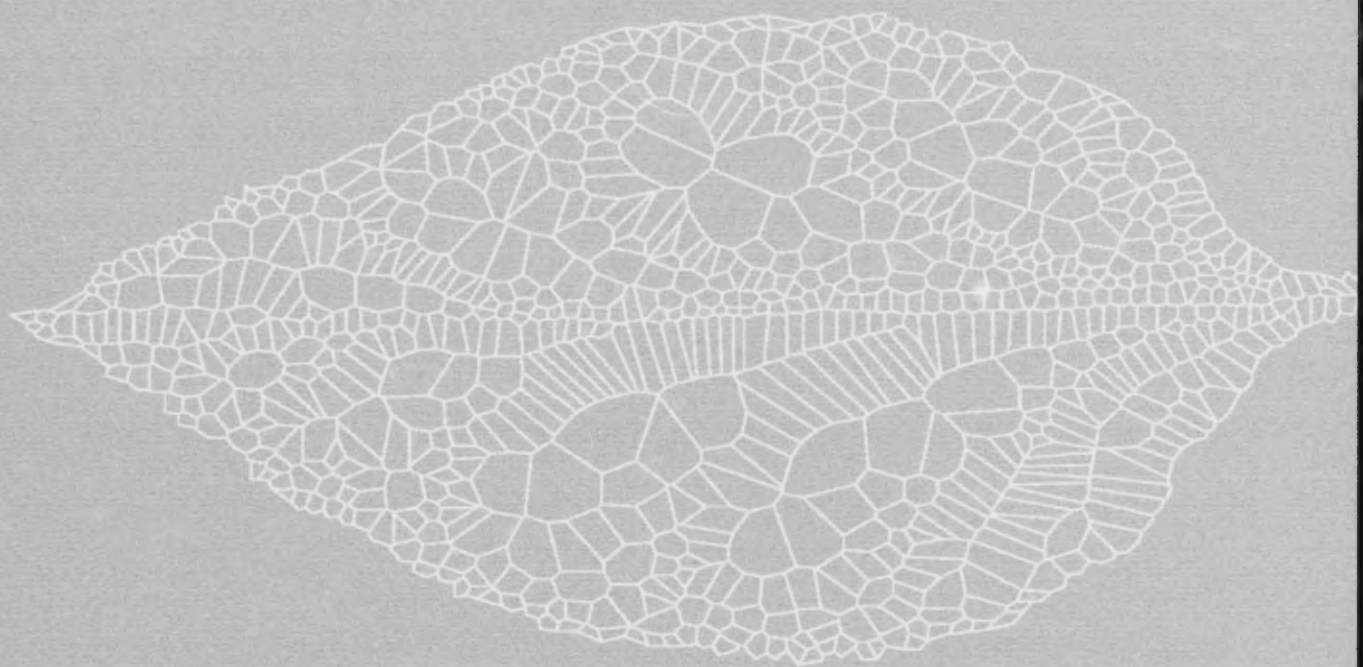
making CHANGES



Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the expertise, time , and commitment of all contributors. To ensure that the book is helpful to women in all their diversity, women from various communities were consulted, including African Nova Scotian women, Mi'kmaq women, lesbian women, senior women, transgender women, and women with disabilities.

Cover image:

The cover image was selected to remind us that all living things have fragile elements which nurture their greatness, like a tree that is nourished by the slender veins in its leaves. We must always remember to treat all living things, inluded each other, with respect and support.

Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

Safety Alert

If you have experienced domestic abuse, know that you are not alone, and that there are a variety of supports available to you.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, you can call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free line**:
1 855 225 0220

You can also contact the local transition house (women's shelter) in your area (see page 150 of this book for a complete list).

Your local number:

_____

For more information and resources, visit the **Domestic Violence Resource Centre website**:
nsdomesticviolence.ca

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a book for women
experiencing intimate partner abuse

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Who is this book for?

If you are a woman experiencing abuse or if you have been abused, this book is intended to help you. A lot of the information is also relevant to men and non-binary people who have experienced abuse.

Everyone wants respectful and caring relationships with their intimate partners, and lives for themselves and their children that are safe and free of abuse. It can be difficult and frightening to recognize and admit that you are being abused, but it is essential so that you can make changes to keep yourself and your children safe.

Many couples want to stay together, but a loving relationship takes commitment and work from both partners. Relationships are not always easy, but everyone has the potential to change, and to have respectful relationships free of violence.

We hope this book will help you to understand abuse and learn about the resources and supports that are available in Nova Scotia. These supports aim to help survivors of abuse understand their options more fully, and to assist couples in achieving loving, abuse-free relationships. This book offers steps that you can take to address abuse in a relationship.

If you are a friend, family member, service provider, or other support person, reading this book can also be helpful for you so that you can better understand how to help someone who has experienced abuse.

A lot of the information is also relevant to **men and non-binary people** who have experienced abuse.

RESOURCES

If you have questions about the information in this book, or if you or someone you know needs help and support, you can call the transition house in your area. You can also call a transition house if you just want to talk. The Directory at the end of this book has a complete list of transition houses with contact information.

If you are a woman who has experienced abuse, there are people who can help you. You can call a transition house anytime to get information, for support and help with safety planning, or for help from a trained counselor. These services are available to you even if you do not stay in the transition house.

When you call a transition house, you do not have to give your name. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or need a translator, interpretation may be available.

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Understanding Abuse

Abuse is also called family violence, domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

What is abuse?

Abuse takes many forms. Abuse can be emotional, psychological, social, sexual, financial, and/or physical. A number of these kinds of abuse can occur at the same time.

Throughout this book we will be using the term 'abuse'.

abuse

Nova Scotia's Domestic Violence Action Plan defines abuse this way:

"Domestic violence is deliberate and purposeful violence, abuse, and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in an intimate relationship. It occurs between two persons where one exercises power over the other, causing fear, physical, and/or psychological harm. It may be a single act or a series of acts forming a pattern of abuse. Domestic violence can occur in any relationship, however, women are primarily the victims and men are primarily the perpetrators. Children and young people may experience harm by being exposed to violence in adult relationships, being the direct victims of violence, or a combination of the two."

– *Domestic Violence Action Plan (2010).*

In an abusive relationship there may be:

Psychological or emotional abuse, such as:

- intimidation and harassment
- threats to harm a person, a pet, or property
- intentionally damaging property
- hurting or killing pets
- keeping a person from having control over their own finances or from making their own decisions
- following or stalking a person, or online stalking and harassment.

Verbal abuse, such as:

- yelling and screaming
- name-calling
- making threats, or
- making hurtful criticisms.

Physical abuse, such as:

- pushing
- hitting
- punching
- choking
- kicking
- biting
- forced confinement (not letting someone leave)
- keeping someone from having the necessities of life (for example, food), or
- trying to physically abuse someone.

Sexual abuse, such as:

- unwanted sexual touching
- forcing someone to have sex
- unwanted violence during sex, such as choking a person without their consent, or
- trying to sexually abuse someone.

LEGAL INFO

Some forms of abuse are criminal offences in the Criminal Code, including:

- physical assault, such as hitting, punching, strangling, etc.
- sexual assault
- threats to harm or to kill
- forcibly withholding food and medical treatment
- taking another person's source of income through fraud or threats
- stalking or criminal harassment (creating fear by repeatedly following, communicating, or attempting to communicate with a person)
- forced labour
- forced prostitution (human trafficking)

Healthy relationships

A healthy relationship involves respect and care from both partners.

In a healthy relationship, neither partner should be afraid of the other partner. A healthy relationship is non-violent and involves equality between partners.

We all deserve healthy relationships with our partners.

Negotiation and Fairness
Non-threatening Behaviour
Economic Partnership
Respect
Trust and Support
Shared Responsibility
Responsible Parenting
Honesty and Accountability

In a healthy relationship there is:

Negotiation and Fairness

This means that both partners:

- seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
- accept change
- are willing and open to compromise

Non-threatening Behaviour

This means that both partners:

- talk and act in a way that allows both of them to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves

Economic Partnership

This means that both partners:

- make money decisions together
- benefit from financial arrangements

Respect

This means that both partners:

- listen to each other non-judgmentally
- are emotionally affirming and understanding
- value the other's opinions

Trust and Support

This means that both partners:

- support each other's goals in life
- respect each other's right to their own feelings, friends, activities and opinions

Shared Responsibility

This means that both partners:

- mutually agree on a fair distribution of work
- make family decisions together

Responsible Parenting

This means that both partners:

- share parental responsibilities
- provide a positive, non-violent role model for the children

Honesty and Accountability

This means that both partners:

- accept responsibility
- take responsibility for past use of violence
- admit being wrong
- communicate openly and truthfully

Is it abuse?

It is rare for a couple not to have an occasional argument. However, sometimes you begin to be afraid of your partner and your behaviour changes because of this fear.

The line between normal conflict and abuse is not always clear. It is not easy for most of us to recognize and accept that we are being abused.

Some people struggle to identify their situation as abusive. You may feel that your partner loves you, because partners who abuse often do express love toward the people they hurt. Keep in mind that anyone can choose not to abuse, and that there are other ways to behave toward the people we love. Everyone has to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

You may feel sorry for your partner, or hope you can change your partner. Perhaps your partner is insecure, has problems, or was abused. There is no excuse for abuse. We all have to learn to feel good about ourselves without putting others down. It doesn't mean you don't love your partners if you want your partner to change and stop abusing.

Regardless of why someone is abusive, their behaviour cannot be justified. Abuse is wrong.

LEGAL INFO

It is very important to remember that abuse is never acceptable, and physical and sexual abuse are crimes under Canadian law.

It could be abuse if ...

Your partner ...

- gets jealous when others are around
- destroys, or threatens to destroy, your possessions
- uses put-downs, name-calling, or threats
- makes you choose between your friends/family and your partner
- blames you when things go wrong
- pushes you
- hits you
- threatens to take your children
- hits the walls
- yells at you
- harms, or threatens to harm, your pet
- threatens to harm your family members or friends
- threatens suicide or self-harm

If you feel you have to ...

- ask permission to spend money or go out
- take the blame when things go wrong
- "make things right" just for your partner
- do what your partner wants
- make excuses for your partner's behavior

If you feel ...

- afraid to make decisions for fear of your partner's reaction or anger
- isolated from friends, family, and activities
- afraid to express your own opinions or say "no"
- afraid to leave your partner

If the lists above sound familiar to you, you may be experiencing abuse.

Why does abuse happen?

There are many other complex reasons why a partner might abuse. A partner may abuse because they:

- learned this behaviour in their own family
- feel it is acceptable for men to control women
- believe abuse is a way to have power
- have low self-esteem/are insecure
- are unemployed or live in poverty
- think that there are few, if any, consequences for their violent acts
- have a mental illness or suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, or
- abuse alcohol or drugs

Many factors can influence why people choose to be violent. For example, traditional gender roles may lead family members to believe the man is the legal head of the household and should control the family. There is no easy answer to why abuse happens.

Some men are brought up to believe that it is okay to use force to control their female partners or solve family problems.

Some women report feeling like they are being treated like property, belonging first to a father or other male relative and later to a husband.

Traditional gender roles

can also influence the dynamics of abuse in same-gender relationships and relationships in which one or more of the partners are transgender. LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) women, for example, may be shamed by their partners for being too feminine or too masculine, for not "passing" according to socially accepted gender norms, for being out, for not being out, or for a number of other reasons. See page 26 for more discussion about how domestic abuse can impact LGBTQ partners.

Many of us grew up in families where there was a lot of conflict or where violence was a common experience. Violence is on television, in movies, in video games, in advertisements, and online. It is often considered normal to be dominant and even to be violent, especially for men.

Social expectations can play a role in abuse. Both men and women may feel pressured to act out traditional gender roles. Social expectations can lead people to believe that it is acceptable for men to be 'tough' and abusive, and for women to be peacekeepers who make sure everyone in the home is happy. These gender roles can make men feel pressured to show their masculinity through controlling their female partners.

Gender roles can also make it seem that a power imbalance in relationships between men and women is normal and acceptable. The pressures of traditional gender roles often lead women to be blamed if their home is not harmonious, even if their partner is choosing to abuse. These pressures can also lead to women blaming themselves.

People who abuse often believe that ending the abuse is not their responsibility. They often blame the victim. They might say, "she made me" or "she drove me to it".

Abusive partners sometimes also confuse abusive behaviour with expressing anger. Anger is an emotion that everyone experiences, and it can be expressed in healthy ways. Abuse is never acceptable.

Sometimes actions are in self-defense or an immediate response to being abused. If you respond to abuse by yelling, putting your partner down, slapping, or using aggressive behavior, it does not in any way excuse your partner's abusive behavior.

No one has the right to abuse others.

Is there a pattern to abuse?

In an abusive relationship, your partner might only be abusive on a rare occasion, or might be abusive to you only once. Other abusive partners are abusive many times during the relationship. Abuse and violence can start early in some relationships.

In other relationships, the abuse may start later—sometimes during pregnancy. Violence and abuse may be used to maintain power and control over you. You may notice that there is a pattern to this behaviour.

It could look like this:

- Tension and anger start to build up. Sometimes there is an argument between you and your partner.
- Your partner physically abuses you or makes threats about becoming violent.
- Then there is a cool-down, make-up, or calm stage. Your partner may apologize and promise that it will never happen again. Your partner may reinforce these statements with "quick fixes" such as buying you gifts, dinner, or flowers. Often these actions are focused on making the person who abused feel better rather than trying to make you feel better.

Alternatively, some abusive partners begin to take responsibility and engage in long-term solutions such as seeking help from family, friends or counselors.

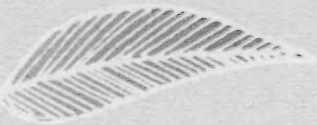
If a partner engages in "quick fixes"t the changes are often temporary. In some cases, the tension builds up again, and the abuse starts over.

Over time the abuse may increase in intensity. Even if your abusive partner does take responsibility through engaging in long-term change, changes may take time. Sometimes the abuse happens again in spite of the progress your partner has made. You have to decide for yourself if you want to continue to work on, or leave, your relationship.

There is a pattern to abuse...

Tension and anger

Abuse



Quick fix

...but you can step out of the cycle.

The effects of abuse

People who are abused often live with constant fear, worry, guilt, and self-blame. If you have experienced abuse from your partner, you may:

- begin to feel worthless, helpless, or ashamed
- feel like a failure
- feel isolated and degraded.

The effects of emotional or psychological abuse cannot be seen, but can be just as harmful as physical abuse. If you have experienced abuse of any kind, you may feel that no one could ever love you. You may feel stupid, ugly and alone. You may begin to lose your self-respect. You may begin to use alcohol or drugs to escape.

You may feel like the hardest thing is feeling the loss of:

- your self-respect
- respect for your partner
- someone to be with
- a sense of hope
- happiness
- love
- companionship
- the feeling of safety that a relationship provides
- family and friends
- independence
- your future goals and dreams
- laughter and joy
- your own identity
- freedom
- the ability to make decisions

RESOURCES

Even if you are not ready to make changes, sometimes it helps to talk it through. **Transition houses** are there to offer this support. Call 1 855 225 0220, or your local transition house (women's shelter), if you want to just talk.

For information about children and abuse, see page 97 of this book.

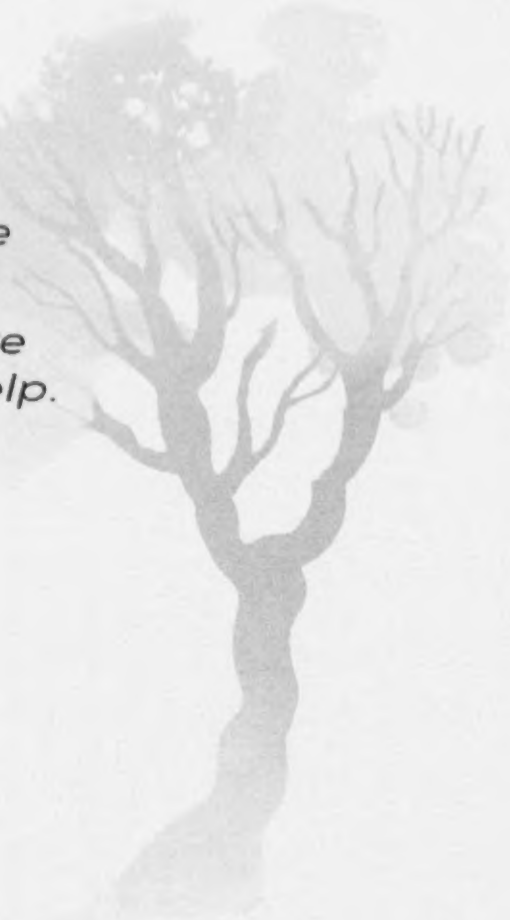
Remember

There is no excuse for abuse. Abuse of any kind is never okay.

The abuse is not your fault. No one deserves to be abused

It takes a lot of courage to face these issues.

You are not alone. There are people willing to help.



Challenges to accessing support

The following sections are written about women who have experienced abuse. This is because of the reality that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. However, many of the following points may be equally valid for men and non-binary people (people who don't identify with the gender binary) as well.

Women who have experienced abuse may have different experiences. Their stories may not be same, but there are often similarities. Many women feel isolated and alone. They may feel responsible for their partner's abuse and emotional state. Sometimes they blame themselves for the abuse.

Women who have experienced abuse may keep the abuse a secret because they fear that if they tell anyone they will:

- break up their family
- lose their children
- lose their support and social networks, friends, family and community
- bring dishonour and shame to the family
- have to live in poverty
- make their partner angry and/or retaliate

Women from many diverse and different backgrounds may be abused.

Women who experience abuse may:

- have different levels of education and income
- be different ages
- have different abilities
- have different sexual orientations and gender identities
- be from different spiritual groups, cultures or races.

SAFETY

If you have experienced abuse, you can always call a Transition House hotline and just talk: 1 855 225 0220

Women from different racial or cultural groups, immigrant and migrant women, lesbian and queer women, bisexual women, transgender women, women living in poverty, and women who are disabled often face additional challenges in leaving abuse. Perhaps a woman's faith or tradition says she must stay at home with her family, even if she is being abused.

Women may have had bad experiences with the law, the medical profession, the justice system, or government agencies. Language barriers, racism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination, fear of being deported, isolation, and disbelief are just a few of the additional barriers to reporting and dealing with abuse.

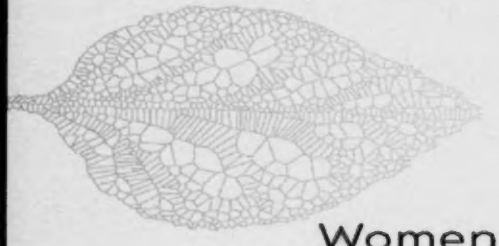
Women from different backgrounds and identity groups are impacted by abuse differently. It is important to recognize how factors such as race, class, sexual orientation, and ability can make leaving abuse and finding support more difficult.

Women Living in Poverty

Women living in poverty are more vulnerable to abuse and may face a number of challenges in leaving abuse. For example, women living in poverty may be reluctant to leave an abusive partner because they feel they do not have the resources to live on their own. If they have children, they may also have concerns about being able to support their children without the income of the abusive partner.

Sometimes women living in poverty have more than one job to make ends meet. This can make accessing support services difficult. For example, getting time off to see a lawyer or other support person may be a challenge. Sometimes not having money for transportation to support agencies can also be a barrier.

Poverty can make relationships difficult because there are pressures on both partners to get by on limited resources. Though there is never an excuse for abuse, poverty can create emotional and psychological stress that can fuel abuse and make it worse.



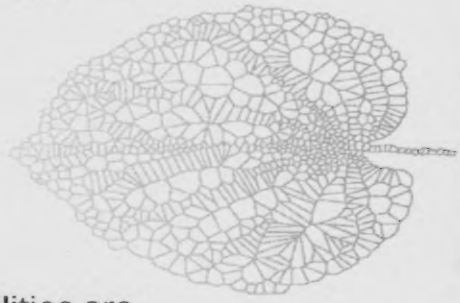
Women in Rural Communities

Women living in rural communities may also face barriers in leaving abuse and finding support. Rural women often do not tell anyone about the abuse they are suffering because it can be hard to stay anonymous in a small community.

In a small community, there may also be fewer support services for women to rely on. They may need to seek support outside their community, which can be a difficult if there are no reliable and affordable transportation services in place.

To find support and assistance available in your area, see the resources starting on page 117 of this book.

If they leave their community, rural women risk being isolated from the support of friends, neighbours, and family. They may also have to remove their children from their school, their grandparents and other family members, and their community.



Women with Disabilities

Women who have physical and intellectual disabilities are often more vulnerable to abuse than other women. Women with disabilities may also encounter a number of obstacles in leaving abuse and trying to access support services.

A woman with a disability may find that her abusive partner will use her disability in order to be abusive. For example, her abusive partner may threaten to destroy assistive devices or make other threats to stop her from leaving. Her partner may make her feel worthless or that the abuse is her fault. She could also feel that in leaving her abusive partner she would be losing an essential support person.

Women with disabilities may have difficulty explaining the dynamics of abuse to police and service providers. They may also encounter physical obstacles when trying to access services (for example, if a service she needs is in an inaccessible space).

African Nova Scotian Women

African Nova Scotia women may also face particular challenges in leaving abusive partners and finding the help they need. For example, historical and present discrimination and experiences of racism have resulted in many African Nova Scotians not trusting the police and the justice system.

Some African Nova Scotian women may worry that reporting abuse will expose their partners to racism from police and the justice system. They may also worry that reporting abuse will keep alive stereotypes that African Canadian men are violent.

For many African Nova Scotian people, extended family and kinship are important. Some African Nova Scotian women may fear having to leave their community and family support network if they report abuse and seek help.

See page 124 for resources for African Nova Scotian women.

First Nations Women

Women in First Nations Communities also face unique barriers in leaving abuse and accessing support services. First Nations women may be reluctant to leave abuse because it can mean leaving a community where they have kinship and cultural roots.

First Nations women may also worry about confirming stereotypes and negative perceptions about First Nations people and family violence.

First Nations women may have fears that staff at support services will not understand their cultural needs. They may also be reluctant to interact with police or the justice system because of past and current experiences of oppression and racism by the police and justice system.

RESOURCES

Addressing Mi'kmaq Family Violence Family Violence and Aboriginal Communities: Building Our Knowledge and Direction through Community Based Research and Community Forums, May 2011, report of the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum Justice Working committee. www.tripartiteforum.com/downloads/x/Addressing-Mikmaq-Family-Violence-Executive-Summary.pdf

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres, in Waycobah and Millbrook First Nations, deliver treatment and prevention services to all 13 Mi'kmaw First Nation Bands of Nova Scotia. MFHC Board of Directors are the 13 Bands and a Representative from the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres (MFHC) operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All of the counsellors and support staff are committed to assisting Mi'kmaw women, men, and children to develop and maintain a healthy and violence-free lifestyle. Families will receive treatment within their own communities with counsellors who are knowledgeable of their language, values, and lifestyle.

When women, men, and children are referred to off-reserve programs, the counsellor will ensure that the family member successfully accesses and receives services. This type of holistic programming is well established and practices by MFCS. The **Whole-Family Treatment Program** is based on the thinking and recommendations of the local and national First Nations community.

Services:

- Protection, safety, shelter, and basic life necessities to women and children.
- 24-hour crisis support telephone line.
- Support and information to women, men, and children to enable them to develop and maintain a healthful and violence-free lifestyle.
- Individual and Group Counselling for women, men, and children.
- Outreach services to women, men, and children.
- Referral and follow-up to other social services programs.
- Community Education in Family Violence Intervention, Treatment, and Prevention

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre
Phone 902-756-3440

Millbrook Family Healing Centre
Phone 902-893-8483

The Native Council of Nova Scotia serves Mi'kmaq/ Aboriginal peoples residing off-reserve in Nova Scotia throughout traditional Mi'kmaq territory, and operates the **Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter**, a second stage housing program. A full time Community Support Counsellor is also available to assist clients to gain a perspective on their situation and consider alternatives and options.

Welkaqnik Management Committee
Toll-free. 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca

The Native Social Counselling Agency assist off-reserve Aboriginal clients facing social problems and conditions, with confidential support referral services, and who are in need of counselling referral services.
N.C.N.S. Community Support Counsellor
P.O. Box 1320, Truro, N.S. B2N 5N2
Phone 1-902-895-1738
ncns.ca

For additional resources, see page 144 of this book.

Immigrant Women

Women who are new to Canada also face challenges in leaving abusive relationships. Living in a new country can result in isolation from family and friends, language barriers, and cultural differences that can create difficulties for immigrant women who have experienced abuse.

Women who are new to Canada may not understand Canadian laws and their rights as women living in Canada. Some women may also have concerns about being on their own without male protection.

Newcomer women may also worry about how leaving an abusive relationship could affect their immigration status. This fear is common for many immigrant women, but especially for women who have conditional permanent resident status.

In 2012, Citizenship and Immigration Canada created a new category of **conditional permanent resident status**. This status applies to some spouses who are sponsored to come to Canada. If you have this status, you must be able to show proof that you have lived with your sponsoring spouse for two years in order to get the condition taken off your status.

There is an important exception to this two year requirement for newcomers who are in abusive relationships. If you or your children have experienced domestic abuse, the two year condition is not intended to apply to you.

You can call **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** at 1-888-242-2100 in order to request an exception to the two year condition. Whatever you say during this phone call will be kept confidential.

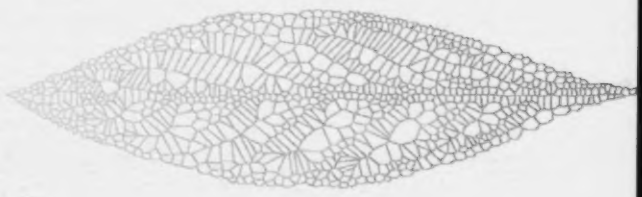
You do not have to stay in an abusive relationship in order to keep your immigration status and stay in Canada.

The Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) is a leading community organization that welcomes immigrants to Nova Scotia. ISANS offers services and creates opportunities for immigrants. For more information, visit: isans.ca.

For information on **custody and access, and separation and divorce**, visit: legalinfo.org/i-have-a-legal-question/family-law/

Fact sheets are available in five languages.
For **health information and advice** 811
811 provides services in over 125 languages.

See page 138 for additional resources for immigrant women and migrant women.



immigrants

People who have moved to live in Canada and have Permanent Resident status such as Government Assisted Refugees, Privately Sponsored Refugees, Economic and Family class immigrants, Provincial Nominees.

migrants

People who have moved to Canada and do not have permanent status such as Temporary Foreign Workers, Refugee Claimants, International Students and their families. They are eligible for different services. Immigration status is a crucial social determinant of physical and mental health.

LGBTQ

People often assume that domestic abuse primarily affects cisgender women in heterosexual relationships. This is not true. Lesbians, gay, bisexual, non-binary, transgender, and queer people experience abuse as often, and in some cases more often, than cisgender women in heterosexual relationships.

cis-gender

A word to describe someone whose gender identity matches the gender they were assumed to be at birth. This is different from someone who is transgender, whose gender identity is different than the gender they were assigned at birth.

non-binary

A word to describe people who do not fit the traditional gender binary of men and women. They may identify as having no gender, more than one gender, or moving between genders.

queer

Though this word has historically been used as a slur, many LGBTQ people have reclaimed this word to describe themselves. Queer can mean many things to different people, but is generally used by those who fall outside of the norms of gender and sexuality.

Bisexual women in particular experience domestic abuse at much higher than average rates. This can be because of a number of reasons, such as a bisexual woman's partner feeling threatened by her bisexual identity and wanting to control her.

In some cases LGBTQ people who are in abusive relationships do not tell anyone about the abuse because they fear they won't be believed or because they fear their partner may use their sexual orientation or gender identity in an abusive way. For example, they may fear that their abusive partner will expose their sexuality or gender identity to their families, friends, employers, or community.

Women who are in relationships with other women may worry about being dismissed by others because of the false assumption that only men can be abusers. Women who are in same-gender relationships may be impacted by the false belief that violence between people of the same gender is equal and so both partners are equally responsible. This same is true for men who are in relationships with other men.

Transgender and non-binary people may be afraid to leave or report abuse because they do not know if support services such as transition houses have transgender-inclusive policies and staff who are trained to be sensitive to their needs and concerns. In the Halifax area, Adsum House, Alice Housing, and Avalon Sexual Assault Centre have formal transgender-inclusive policies.

See the resources starting on page 141 of this book for contact information.

Other organizations in Halifax and other parts of the province may also be welcoming and supportive. If you are a transgender or non-binary person leaving abuse, it can be helpful to talk to members of your community who might know from their own experiences which services are well equipped to provide a safe, supportive space for you.

It is important to remember that abuse is abuse regardless of your sexual orientation or gender identity. No matter who you are or who you love, you do not deserve to be abused.

Remember

There is no excuse for abuse.
Abuse of any kind is never okay.

The abuse is not your fault.
No one deserves to be abused

It takes a lot of courage to face these issues.

You are not alone.
There are people willing to help.

Emergencies

What to do in an emergency

If you are in danger, you should call 911 immediately.
All 911 calls are recorded and kept as evidence.

It may be a good idea for you to get legal and other advice now, even before there is an emergency.

Safety plan

A safety plan is a plan for increasing safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further abuse. It is good to be prepared with a safety plan.

A safety plan can be a short-term strategy such as what to do during a violent act, or a long-term strategy such as how to stay safe when the relationship has ended.

It can be helpful to memorize your safety plan, because it can be difficult to remember everything in an emergency. If you write down your safety plan, it is important that you keep the safety plan where your partner will not find it.

For a list of programs and services that may be helpful, see the Directory on page 117

These are some things you should do as part of your **safety plan**:

- Establish an escape route. (Know a safe place to go, even if only to make a phone call.)
- If there has been previous abuse, make sure the police are fully aware of the situation.
- Have emergency numbers (a shelter, neighbours, those who will help, in addition to 911) programmed into a safe phone.
- Call a transition house and talk to the staff. Work out a code word with them so they know who is calling if there is a crisis: 1-855-225-0220.
- Speak with your neighbours and other trusted people. Let them know what's going on so they can be watching out and call police if they become concerned.
- Talk to your children. They need to know which neighbour to run to in an emergency and how to use the telephone to call police.
- Put some money aside if possible (for things such as emergency taxi fare) as well as a spare set of car keys in order to leave quickly.

EMERGENCY BAG CHECKLIST

You may want to pack an **emergency bag** in case you need to leave quickly. You should pack what you would need for a few days. You may want to leave the bag with a friend.

If you don't feel safe packing an emergency bag, you may want to make a list of things to take and make sure you know where they are kept.

Some items you may want to bring are:

- money, financial statements, credit cards
- clothes for yourself and the children for a few days
- house keys, car keys
- a cell phone and charger cable
- copies of your lease, mortgage or other deeds, mortgage statements
- car registration, driver's license, car insurance
- identification
- important papers – birth certificates, marriage certificates, social insurance numbers, divorce papers, custody documents, court orders, restraining orders, income tax returns, work permits
- health cards for yourself and the children
- medical and vaccination records
- any medicine you or your children may need
- First Nations status card
- immigration/citizenship papers, passports for you and your children
- the children's favourite toys, books, and special blanket
- picture of your partner (for identification)
- your address book and list of important phone numbers
- your favourite possessions, or other things that will bring you comfort.

Leaving in an emergency

If you want to leave your home, you can ask the police to wait while you get your things. If asked, the police will take you to a safe place like a transition house. If you have children, you have every right to take your children with you.

LEGAL INFO

If you take your children with you, you will need to apply for custody of the children as quickly as possible. Do not take the children out of the province without talking to a lawyer first.

The police will not help you remove your children later without a court order.

If you have to leave in an emergency and decide not to go back for a while, the police can return with you later to get the rest of your personal belongings. They will protect you, but they're not allowed to help you carry things. You may want to bring a friend along to help.

If you decide not to leave and your partner is not arrested, you should write down the names of the police officers who responded in case you need to contact them later.

It is important that you be prepared in case you have to act quickly. Here are some things you might consider:

- Where can you go in an emergency?
- How will you get there? Is there someone who can come and get you? Can you take a car, taxi, or bus?
- Is there someone you can call to let them know what is happening and where you are going?
- Is there someone you can leave your pets with?
- If you need to go to a transition house, do you know how to get there?

What happens when the police are called?

When the police come, their **first priority is to stop any abuse and make sure everyone is safe**. The police will ask you and your partner questions.

The police will arrest your partner if you've been hurt, if it is likely that the assault will continue or happen again.

The police will need to know who might have seen or heard anything. They may ask other people about what happened. They may interview your neighbours, friends, or anyone else who might have seen or heard something. If anyone has physical injuries or must go to a clinic or hospital, the police may want to talk to the medical staff who treated them.

The police may take pictures of injuries to people involved or damage to property where the abuse happened. They may ask you to go to the police station to have pictures taken.

For safety reasons, the police will ask you and your partner questions separately rather than in the same room.

You can decide whether or not to talk to the police about what happened. If you decide to talk to the police, you should give as much detail as you can. You should let them know about any injuries to people, and/or any damage to belongings or the home.

The police will arrest and remove the person who has been charged with an offence.

LEGAL INFO

Assault and uttering threats are criminal offences. If there is evidence that a criminal offence has occurred, the police are required to lay charges.

Police Priorities

Priority 1
Stop the abuse and make sure everyone is safe.

Priority 2
Gather information by interviewing and taking pictures.

Priority 3
Arrest and remove the person who is being charged.

The police's main concern is for everyone's safety.

What happens if the police lay charges?

If the police lay charges, they may need help to collect evidence of the abuse. There are things you can do to be better prepared to share your story. This includes:

- identifying and securing torn or bloody clothing and any weapons used (such as bottles, ropes, scarves, sticks, knives, etc.)
- taking photos of injuries, broken furniture, or other damage
- saving any threatening answering machine, text or voicemail messages, letters, emails, Facebook posts, etc.
- keeping a record of times and dates, what happened, and any injuries. You should also keep a record of the names and badge numbers of any police officers involved.

LEGAL INFO

If the police do not take pictures, you can ask a friend to do so. The person who takes the pictures should sign and date the photos because they may be important evidence in a trial. Typically, however, the police themselves will take photos as appropriate and gather evidence. It is the job of the police to collect evidence. You can assist the police by letting them know about any potential evidence of a crime.

If the police lay charges, they will remove the accused person (your abusive partner) from the home and will typically hold them at the police station, usually for under 24 hours. In some situations, an accused person is not released by the police but is brought before a Judge within 24 hours to decide on their release. Whether your partner is released by police or brought before a Judge depends on a number of factors. These factors can include the nature of the charges, the level of force your partner used, and whether your partner has a previous criminal record.

In cases of domestic assault, an accused person will have to **sign an undertaking or recognizance with a no contact order**.

By signing an **undertaking** with a no contact order an accused person is agreeing not to contact the victim in any way, directly or indirectly, until a Court allows. If an accused person violates a condition in an undertaking, they could face further criminal charges for violating the conditions.

A **recognizance** is similar, but is entered into before a Judge.

The undertaking or recognizance may require that your partner:

- have no direct or indirect contact or communication with you, your children or others
- stay away from your home, workplace, or other locations
- not drink alcohol, or use non-prescription drugs
- not have and/or use firearms
- follow any other conditions that the police or Judge feel are needed to keep you safe.

Undertakings and recognizances can also contain other conditions that the police, Crown Attorney, or Judge feel are appropriate.

The undertaking or recognizance remains in effect until the criminal case is concluded in Court.

For more information on no contact orders, see pg 57.

direct contact

Direct contact occurs if your partner speaks to you in person or on the phone, writes to you, leaves a telephone, voice mail or email message, or comes into your presence.

indirect contact

Indirect contact occurs when your partner communicates, or tries to communicate, a message to you through another person, or by leaving something for you where they know you will find it.

LEGAL INFO

You might want the **no contact order changed** because you want to have continued contact with your partner, but only the accused person can apply to Court to have an undertaking changed. The Court will consider whether you would like contact with your partner, but the bigger concern of the Court is to protect public safety.

If your partner does not follow the release conditions in the undertaking or recognizance then they can be held in jail until the charges are dealt with by the Court.

SAFETY

If you feel that your partner may violate a no-contact order, you may want to prepare a safety plan before your partner is released. *For more information on safety planning see pages 31-32, and the section starting on page 45.*

If charges are laid, the police may refer you to services such as a transition house or provincial victim services. You do not have to leave your home or stay in a transition house to get help from a transition house or victim services. These agencies can give you emotional or practical support, as well as information about community resources and police procedures.

Under Nova Scotia law, the police must keep you informed about what happens to your abusive partner if your partner is arrested for assault.

If you have been the victim of a domestic assault, you can talk to the police in order to find out the conditions of your partner's release.

You can also ask for a copy of the undertaking if the police or the Court did not give you one, and should keep it with you at all times.

You can get information from the police who made the arrest, police victim services, or a provincial Victim Services office. *For more contact information see page 152 of the Directory.*

If criminal charges are laid against your partner, you may be required to go to Court to testify.

The provincial Victims' Services Program and some police victim services departments provide court preparation support if you have to testify in criminal court. Transition houses also offer information and support.

RESOURCES

To find the provincial **Victim Services office** nearest you, call their toll-free number (1-888-470-0773), or visit novascotia.ca/just/victim_services/contact.asp

The Judge may refer or order your abusive partner to go to a men's intervention program. These programs work to help people change their behavior. They encourage people to accept responsibility for their behavior and to create respectful, non-abusive relationships with their partners. *For more information download the Men and Boys brochure at http://women.gov.ns.ca/freedom-from-violence.*

If English is not your first language, you may need a translator or interpreter when you speak with the police, the Court, or transition house staff. Most of these agencies provide this kind of support. *For a list of services and contact information see page 138 of the Directory.*

In small communities, people are likely to know one another. If you are worried about confidentiality and privacy, you can ask for the interpreter's name before the interpreter is given your name, and before you meet. You can refuse an interpreter who is known to you and your family.

You should ask for an interpreter as early as possible, so that there is time to get an appropriate interpreter. For some languages, it can take time to get an interpreter.

RESOURCES

For more information about going to Court to testify, you can read the following brochure, *Being a Witness in a Family Violence Case*: legalinfo.org/criminal-law/being-a-witnessagir-comme-temoin.html

If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia**'s 24-hour toll-free line: 1 855 225 0220

You can also contact the local transition house (women's shelter) in your area (see pages150-151 of this book for a complete list) or visit the DomesViolence Resource Centre website: nsdomesticviolence.ca.

Domestic Violence Court

Some people have access to a Domestic Violence Court Program. The program has been operating in Sydney since 2012. It is a voluntary program that is designed to encourage people who have been charged with a domestic abuse related offense to take responsibility for their actions and to get early counseling. If your partner goes through a counseling program, this can increase your safety and the safety of your children.

In order to qualify for the Domestic Violence Court Program, your partner must:

- live in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- be eligible for a community-based sentence,
- take responsibility for their actions by pleading guilty, and
- agree to a needs and risk assessment to determine what kind of programming would be appropriate.

When your partner has finished their program, they go back to Court for sentencing. Sentencing is up to the Judge, who will take into consideration your partner's participation in the program.

RESOURCES

For more information on the **Domestic Violence Court Program**, call .....(902) 563-3510 or visit courts.ns.ca/Provincial_Court/NSPC_domestic_violence_court.htm.

You can download the **Court Fact Sheet** novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/DV_Court_Fact_Sheet.pdf

or **Domestic Violence Court: FAQ** novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/DV_Court_FAQ.pdf factsheets.

What happens if child protection gets involved?

If a report is made, Child Protection Services will contact the child's parents. Child Protection Services will suggest services and resources to help the family. If Child Protection Services suspects that your child is experiencing abuse and/or neglect, or may be in need of protection, they will conduct an investigation. They can remove a child from the home if they believe it is necessary in order to keep the child safe.

LEGAL INFO

If you are asked to sign anything, or if your child is removed from your home, you should contact a lawyer immediately. Domestic abuse outreach services or a transition house can give you information and support, including information about how to get legal advice (see the Legal Matters section of this book starting on page 87 or call 1 855 225 0220 any time of day for services).

Child Protection matters can be very complicated and can have a serious, potentially long-term impact on your family. In some cases, children are removed permanently from their parents. If Child Protection Services becomes involved with your family, it is very important that you speak to a lawyer as soon as possible.

For more information, see the "Your Children" section of this book starting on page 97.

Sometimes Child Protection will ask parents to sign a **Memorandum of Understanding**. This is an agreement to allow for services to be put in place while the children stay in your care.

If Child Protection Services wants you to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, you should call Nova Scotia Legal Aid. Nova Scotia Legal Aid will sometimes provide appointments to parents who need legal advice.

RESOURCES

Find the **Legal Aid** office nearest you at:
nslegalaid.ca/contact.php

For more information about **Child Protection**, visit the **Family Law Nova Scotia** website:
nsfamilylaw.ca/child-protection/faqs

Child protection offices, and the Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services are listed on page 144.

For more information about domestic abuse and the law visit: **Abuse is wrong in any family – know the law**
legalinfo.org/doc_download/182-eng-long-womens-web.html

Factsheet on **Family Violence/Domestic Abuse What You Need To Know**.
legalinfo.org/family-law/family-violence.html

Remember

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Abuse of any kind is never okay.

The abuse is not your fault.
No one deserves to be abused

It takes a lot of courage to face these issues.

You are not alone.
There are people willing to help.

Safety Planning

Help is available

If you have difficulty figuring out whether you are at risk, you may find it helpful to talk with someone at the local transition house, or with a counselor at a men's intervention program.

Women's centres can also provide information and support. A counselor or transition house worker can help figure out how safe you are and identify possible ideas and options that would make you safer. They can also give you information and support, and help you explore your options and any planning steps that you want to consider.

You may decide that you want to live at a transition house or shelter for a few weeks until you can figure out if you want to stay and work on improving your relationship, or if you want to move toward a temporary separation or divorce.

Everyone is different. You must make your own decisions about the strengths of your relationship, and the potential it has to become what you want. Even if you decide to stay with your partner, transition houses can give you the opportunity to learn about improving your relationships, establishing your independence and financial security, or if you just need to talk: 1 855 225 0220

A safer relationship may be possible if both you and your partner:

- want a respectful, fair and caring relationship
- are willing to take responsibility for your own choices and behavior, and to work towards change
- are willing to learn how to stop using threats or resorting to abuse, and
- are able to communicate what you want in your relationship in a non-violent way.

Accessing support

If you are considering whether to stay or leave the relationship, you may have to make some very difficult decisions. You can choose to talk over your situation with a counselor or therapist. They can help you understand more fully what you are thinking and feeling about the relationship and your situation. This process can help you make decisions about your future.

While you may be focused on the reasons to stay, a counselor can help you consider the reasons why you may want to leave. These decisions can be very complex, and everyone has the right to make these decisions for themselves.

If your partner is committed to ending the abuse, your partner will have to take steps to deal with the problems that led to the abusive behaviour. This could include:

- counseling for alcoholism and/or drug use
- addressing past trauma
- dealing with feelings of past victimization
- recognizing the pressures of traditional gender roles
- dealing with feelings of insecurity and desperation
- finding healthy ways to deal with unemployment.

SAFETY

Transition houses can advise you about what help and services are available to you. *See page 150 for contact information.*

Help line numbers can usually be found at the front of the phonebook and in the Yellow Pages under social service organizations as well as women's organizations and services. *See page 117 of the Directory at the back of this book for services.*

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
To find out about services in your area, call 211.
If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free line: 1 855 225 0220**

You may want to pack an emergency bag in case you need to leave quickly. See page 31-32 for Safety Planning and Emergency Bag Checklists.

Finding a counselor or support person

You can find support through private or publically funded counseling. Family therapists are listed under Marriage and Family Therapy in the Yellow Pages. Many employers offer employee assistance programs that will assist with counseling referrals.

In addition to individual counseling, you and your partner can seek counseling together if you feel safe enough to do this. Many couples benefit from having counseling together. This type of counseling is offered through a local family services association or at programs designed to help men heal and repair the effects of their abusive behavior on their families. *See the Directory, starting on page 117, for resources.*

If a no contact order is in place, couples counseling is not an option without a return to Court to have the order changed.

You and/or your children may be eligible for free counseling from the **Criminal Injuries Counselling program**.
See page 126 for contact information.

COUNSELOR CHECKLIST

What to look for in a counselor or support person

You may find it helpful to talk with someone you can trust – a friend or relative, a spiritual leader or elder, a doctor, or a counselor. A support person should be able to offer:

- the opportunity to explore the advantages and disadvantages of continuing your relationship rather than telling you or advising you that you should leave
- the assumption that you know more about your relationship and your partner than the counselor or support person knows
- support to improve your relationship, or support to end your relationship, depending on what you choose for yourself
- the ability to accept if you change your mind about whether you want to stay or leave, and no pressure to choose one option over the other
- acceptance that your partner can be abusive but also loving and caring, which can make the decision to stay or leave very difficult
- access to resources and referrals
- assistance, if asked for, in making a safety plan

Counselors and support people should avoid:

- labeling your partner as "abusive"
- labeling your relationship as an "abusive relationship"
- seeing your partner only as an "abuser"
- not validating any positive things that happen in the relationship.

There are always people you can talk to, such as a trusted friend or relative, or a person at the local transition house. You can call a **transition house** anytime to get information, support and safety planning from a trained counselor, even if you do not want to live at the shelter.

The transition house counselors will give support on the phone. These phone calls are confidential and you do not need to give your name. You can call the **24-hour crisis line: 1 855 225 0220**. If you want to, you can arrange a visit to the transition house to speak with someone in person. Some houses have workers who can meet you in your home or somewhere safe.

Transition houses can help you even if you are not staying at one.

Remember

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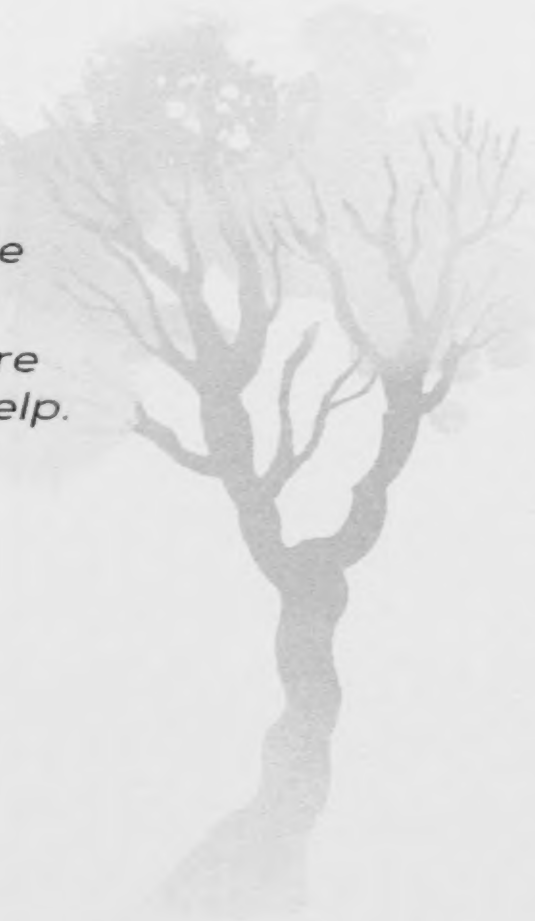
The abuse is not your fault. No one deserves to be abused

It takes a lot of courage to face these issues.

You are not alone. There are people willing to help.



Do I Stay or Leave?

Making the choice to stay or leave can be difficult. There are people who can help you decide what is right for you, your relationship with your partner, and your children. It can be helpful to talk with someone who has walked this journey with others.

Call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free number to just talk: 1 855 225 0220.

How safe is it to stay?

Sometimes people who have experienced abuse say they feel safe in their relationships even if there is abuse.

Before you can make positive choices about your life, you need to be safe.

Sometimes it can be difficult to know how safe you are. For example, if you are in a relationship where the abuse has increased gradually over time, it can be hard to tell how dangerous your situation really is. Sometimes you might not want to tell anyone how serious the danger is because you blame yourself or feel ashamed about what is happening.

SAFETY

The situation may be dangerous if your answer to any of these questions is YES:

Has your partner ever threatened to kill you or anyone else?
Does your partner own a weapon?
Has your partner tried to physically prevent you from leaving?
Do you think your partner might physically hurt you and/or your children?
Has your partner ever assaulted you when you were pregnant?
Has your partner been violent toward others outside the family?
Has your partner been abusive when drinking alcohol or taking drugs?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, you may find it useful to talk to someone about how to stay as safe as possible while planning what to do next.

You should NOT tell your partner if you are planning to leave.

What can I do if I am worried about my safety?

If you feel like you are in immediate danger, you should call 911 or the police right away.

You can call police and report abuse at any time. It does not have to be an emergency.

If you are concerned about your abusive partner threatening or harming you, you can also apply for a Peace Bond or an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs)

If domestic violence has occurred, and your situation is serious and urgent, you can apply for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO). You should check with the local police, transition house or victim services office to talk about applying and to make safety plans for you and your children.

EPOs are short term, temporary orders granted under the Domestic Violence Intervention Act to help protect victims of abuse at a time of crisis.

An EPO can provide a number of conditions including:

- giving you exclusive occupation of your home for up to 30 days
- giving you temporary possession of personal property, such as a car
- giving you or somebody else temporary care and custody of your children
- directing a peace officer, such as a police officer, to remove your partner from the home, and accompany you to your home to supervise getting your personal belongings, or accompany your partner to supervise getting their personal belongings.

It can require your partner to:

- stay away from any place identified in the order, such as your home and workplace
- have no contact with you or another person
- not take, sell, or damage property
- not commit any further acts of abuse against you

An EPO can be put in place right away, and can last up to 30 days. You can apply for an EPO over the phone by calling the Justice of the Peace Centre (*see page 129 for numbers*), or you can go to a transition house where trained staff can help you apply. Police and victim services officers can also help you apply for an EPO at any time. Interpretation may be available for those who need it.

Unlike a Peace Bond, the abuser (called the respondent) will not receive notice when you apply for an EPO. If an EPO is put in place, the police will notify the respondent as soon as possible. Once notified, the respondent must then follow the conditions of the EPO.

To apply for an EPO you must:

- be at least 16 years old,
- have experienced abuse from a person you are, or have been, in an intimate relationship with
- live with the abusive partner now, or have lived with them in the past, or have a child or children together even if you have never lived with each other.

Peace Bonds

A Peace Bond is a court order you can apply for if you fear that your partner or ex-partner will harm you, your family, or your property. A Judge will consider your reasons for the peace bond, and make a decision.

A Peace Bond can require that your abusive partner stay away from you for as long as one year. A Peace Bond may require that the abuser:

- have no direct or indirect contact or communication with you, your children or others
- stay away from your home, workplace, or other locations
- not drink alcohol or use non-prescription drugs
- not have and/or use firearms
- follow any other conditions that the Judge feels are important to keep you safe.

Only a Judge can order a Peace Bond. Usually both you and the abuser will have to go to a court hearing.

Interpretation may be available if you are hearing impaired or if you need a translator.

Applying for a Peace Bond may take some time. If you have an EPO and you think you might want to apply for a Peace Bond in the future, you should talk with a lawyer. In most cases, an application for a Peace Bond can be made at Provincial Court. Family Courts and Supreme Court (Family Divisions) usually do not deal with Peace Bonds.

Unlike an EPO, a Peace Bond application requires that the person named receives notice that an application has been made and has a chance to respond.

If your situation is urgent you may want to talk with a lawyer, the police, a victim services office or transition house staff about applying for an EPO as the EPO provides emergency assistance for individuals at a time of crisis. Longer term measures such as peace bonds may then be accessed.

Deciding to stay

Understanding reasons for staying

Often people ask "Why don't you just leave?"

There are many legitimate reasons why you might stay, even if you do not love your partner or even if you see no potential of the relationship changing. Rather than judging you, others should try to understand your reasons for staying. Often there is more complexity in your relationship than just your partner's abusive behavior.

You might identify with the following reasons for staying with your partner.

Emotional reasons for staying:

- feeling of not being able to cope alone
- fear of threats made by your partner
- fear that your partner will take revenge on you for leaving
- fear of going to Court or calling the police
- feeling responsible for failing and/or for breaking up the family
- fear of loneliness
- loving your partner and hoping that your partner will change
- fear of losing your immigration status or being deported
- believing that you are to blame for your partner's abuse
- fear of blame or rejection by your family or friends
- fear of losing your partner by leaving temporarily
- fear of your partner's threats to keep the children
- fear of your partner's threats to commit suicide or kill you and/or the children
- self-shaming in seeing yourself only as a victim
- not recognizing that you are a victim of abuse.

Financial reasons for staying:

- having no income of your own, or an income that is lower than your partner's
- having debt you share with your partner
- having to leave the family home
- lack of job skills
- a belief that your partner will not pay maintenance or support
- insufficient government assistance
- feelings of shame if you need to rely on government assistance
- lack of affordable child care and housing
- lack of information about your legal rights

Social, cultural, and religious reasons for staying:

- fear of victim blaming, or the attitudes of others who deny or minimize the abuse
- social pressure on women to feel responsible for relationships
- religious beliefs about women's roles and/or beliefs about marriage
- cultural pressures such as concerns about shame and family honour
- lack of culturally competent support services and institutions
- fear of social disapproval if you get separated or divorced
- belief that if you are loving enough you can change your partner
- belief that you need a partner to be whole
- belief that children need a two-parent household
- lack of support or isolation from family and friends
- inadequate support from police, the legal system, etc.
- lack of information about your legal rights
- isolation from your community.

RESOURCES

Transition house counselors can help you even if you are not staying at one. They can give you support over the phone. If you want to, you can arrange a visit to the transition house to speak with someone in person. Some houses have workers who can meet you in your home or somewhere safe. These phone calls are confidential and you do not need to give your name.

Call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free number to just talk: . . . . . 1 855 225 0220.

Deciding to leave

We need to remind ourselves that we are strong. Making decisions and changes can be confusing and difficult. Reading this book is a start.

SAFETY

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free line: 1 855 225 0220**

If you are in an abusive relationship, you may need to leave in an emergency.

In some situations, even if you fear for your life, you could be afraid to leave or feel that you cannot leave.

You always have the option to leave for a while, or you can leave permanently. You have the option to leave even if it's not an emergency situation.

Leaving can be a very hard decision to make. You may find that leaving for a while and returning works for you. This may show your partner that you are serious about the need for change. However, despite your partner's promises to change, you may also find that the abuse continues and the only way to stop it is to leave for good.

Whatever you choose to do, you need to believe in yourself.

Where can you go to be safe?

You need to be somewhere safe. You may want to think about where your partner might look for you and where your partner wouldn't find you. You could stay with a friend or a relative. You could also go to a hotel or a transition house.

Transition houses are emergency shelters for women, with or without children.

There are several transition houses in Nova Scotia. They all take children. Transition houses have staff who will work with you to understand your options. Some transition houses are wheelchair accessible. Transition houses do not allow pets.

Transition houses usually have secret addresses so that women can stay safe. When you call a transition house, staff will arrange to meet with you. If you are in an emergency situation and the police are called to your home, the police can drive you to the transition house.

You can call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's toll-free number (1 855 225 0220) to find the nearest transition house. *See page 150 of this book for a list of Transition House phone numbers.*

There will be someone to listen to you at the transition house. Staff can give you advice about your medical, legal, and financial situation. They will help you explore what you can do. They will not force you to do anything. You can decide what's best for you.

What you discuss with transition house staff will be private. However, there are some exceptions to this. You should ask a transition house staff person to explain these exceptions. One important exception is that anyone who suspects that a child is being abused must report this to Child Protection Services. This includes the staff at transition houses.

At transition houses:

- You can stay for up to six weeks.
- Food, clothing, and other necessities are provided.
- There is no cost to stay, but you are expected to help with cooking and housework, and to abide by house rules.

There will be other women and children at the transition house. It may help you just to talk with someone who has had a similar experience.

If you stay at a transition house, you and your children may be given a private room, or you may have to share a room with others.

All transition houses have outreach programs and workers who will continue to help you once you leave the transition house.

If you decide not to stay at a transition house, transition house staff can still help you with information and referral services.

Some transition houses have wheelchair accessible rooms and baths (*see page 150 for houses that are wheelchair accessible*).

If the abuse continues

Once you leave, your partner's abusive behaviour may continue for a while, or get worse. Your abusive partner may try to control you financially, through the children, through the courts, through physical abuse, or by threatening and harassing you. One way you can handle this is to have as little contact with your partner as possible. You can do this by communicating through your lawyer, or through the police when necessary. If you are still afraid, you can apply for a Peace Bond if you don't have one yet.

Your abusive partner may:

- be very loving and generous
- shower you with gifts and attention
- try to scare you into returning
- use relatives or friends to pressure you

If your abusive partner continues to contact you, they may be breaking the conditions of their release, or they could be charged with criminal harassment. You should keep a written record of all contact with your abusive partner as well as what your partner does or says. You should also keep any written or recorded messages from your partner. You should tell the police, your partner's probation/parole officer (if your partner has one), and your lawyer if your partner contacts you.

Transition house staff, the police, the probation/parole officer, provincial and police Victim Services, your lawyer, a counselor, or a supportive friend can help you get through this period. You shouldn't be afraid to ask for help. You don't deserve to be harassed. You deserve a better life.

RESOURCES

To find your nearest **transition house**, see page 150, or visit thans.ca/get-help/find-a-shelter.

For provincial and police **Victim Services** contact information, see page 152.

You can find more information about post-separation abuse from the **Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia**: legalinfo.org.

Internet and computer safety

Computers and mobile devices can store a lot of private information, including:

- emails
- texts
- instant messages
- internet searches
- bookmarked webpages
- webpages viewed
- internet-based phone and IP-TTY calls
- web-based purchases
- banking

SAFETY

If you are in danger, it is important that you try to use a safe computer that your partner cannot access. You can use a computer in a public library, at a community centre, or at a trusted friend's house.

If you think you are being monitored on your home computer, you should be careful about how you use your computer. It doesn't take special skills to monitor someone's computer and Internet activities—anyone can do it. You may want to keep using the monitored computer for regular, everyday activities like looking up the weather, and use a safer computer to research an escape plan, look for new jobs or apartments, arrange travel, or ask for help.

It is not always possible to delete or clear all the "footprints" that show what you have been doing on your computer and online. Also, if you are being monitored, it may be dangerous to change your computer activity (for example, by suddenly deleting the entire Internet history if that is not your regular habit).

Email and Instant/Text Messaging (IM) are not safe or confidential ways to talk to someone about the danger or abuse in your life. If possible, you should call a crisis line on a safe phone instead.

If you use email or IM to communicate about the abuse, make sure to use a safe computer or mobile device, and an account your partner does not know about.

What can I do if my partner is harassing me online?

If your abusive partner is harassing you online, you may be able to apply to the Justice of the Peace Centre under the Cyber-safety Act of Nova Scotia for a **protection order** that addresses the online harassment and abuse. A protection order may order this person to:

- stop communicating with you
- stop communicating about you
- hand over any electronic device used to access the internet or
- other remedies that the Court finds appropriate.

LEGAL INFO

You can apply for a protection order from the Justice of the Peace Centre by calling 1-866-816-6555 or emailing JPcentre@gov.ns.ca

You can also speak to someone at the **CyberSCAN** unit of Nova Scotia. The CyberSCAN unit is there to investigate complaints about cyberbullying and online harassment. Though the CyberSCAN unit sometimes works with police, it is not the police.

If you are experiencing online harassment and abuse, you can contact the CyberSCAN unit at 1-855-702-8324 or 902-424-6990 within the HRM to file a complaint. A CyberSCAN investigator can help you in gathering evidence, looking into your issue, and coming to a resolution. If it is appropriate, the investigator could apply for a prevention order on your behalf to stop the online harassment.

You can find more information about the CyberSCAN unit here: cyberscan.novascotia.ca

Abuse and the workplace

Abuse can affect every aspect of your life, including your job. You may:

- miss work
- be distracted at work
- be less productive at work
- be more stressed than usual
- be worried you will lose your job if you talk about the abuse

There are things you can do to help your employer help you stay as safe as possible at work. You could:

- let your employer know if you have protection orders or restraining orders, and if the workplace is mentioned in the orders. It may be helpful to give your employer a copy of the orders.
- give your employer a recent photo or description of your partner. This can help security and reception staff know who to look for or screen.
- write down all incidents of abuse in the workplace, and how the abusive behavior affects your work. Your employer can work with you to address performance issues.
- talk to your employer about scheduling policies or other human resource policies and practices that could help you.

There are ways your employer may be able to help keep you safe at work. You may want to ask:

- if you could work in locations where you are not visible and easily accessible to visitors. This will help prevent people seeing you from outside.
- to have your contact information removed from public records and directories.
- if a co-worker or a supervisor could screen your calls.
- for a new phone number.
- to have your partner's email address blocked from the office system.
- to have a panic button installed in your work area.
- for a well-lit, priority parking spot near the building.
- if a co-worker could escort you to and from your vehicle or public transportation.
- for a cell phone with a pre-programmed 911 security feature.
- for information about resources and people who could offer support.

If you work with your abusive partner, there are steps your employer can take to keep you as safe as possible. These steps could include:

- making sure that the abuser does not work closely with you, or have access to your workspace.
- making an effort to give both employees different work schedules, or having them work at different sites.
- holding your abusive partner accountable for any unacceptable behavior in the workplace, and using disciplinary procedures to deal with abuse.
- calling the police if your abusive partner engages in violence or other criminal activity such as stalking or unauthorized electronic monitoring in the workplace.
- making sure your job is not negatively impacted because you told your employer about the abuse.

(Adapted from Safety Planning at Work, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children: makeitourbusiness.com/guidelines/safety planning at work)

Once you have left

Once you are safe, you can take some time to decide what to do next. You will need time and space to make decisions that are best for you and your children.

Some of the first things you may need to do is to find out about:

- where you can go to be safe
- your legal rights
- what to do if you don't have enough money
- how to get child support and child custody

The following sections provide some information about these issues.

Where do I live?

When you leave an abusive situation, you can go to a transition house, a motel, or stay with your friends or family. In some communities, you may be able to get low-cost housing. The nearest **Housing Nova Scotia** office will have information about low-cost housing. Their offices are listed in the blue pages at the back of the phone book, and online: housing.novascotia.ca.

You can visit the Housing Nova Scotia website for more information and for application forms. (housing.novascotia.ca/programs/public-housing-and-other-affordable-renting-programs). You can also call 211 to find out about the different types of housing available, and how to apply.

In some communities, women who need ongoing housing support may apply to stay at "**second stage housing**": safe and affordable housing for women where you can stay for up to two years. Your local transition house will have information about second stage housing. You can call your local transition house (page 150), or call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia**'s toll-free number (1 855 225 0220) for more information.

The process for getting a place in second stage housing is different depending on the organization. For example, to get the support you need, you may have a telephone interview and then a follow-up meeting. Some second-stage housing organizations have a support worker who will work with you to figure out your housing needs. You may have to go through an application process. *For more information, you can contact the second-stage housing organization nearest you. Contact information for second-stage housing can be found at the back of this book (page 146).*

Renting an apartment or house

Newspaper and websites like Kijiji are good places to start looking for an apartment. The classified ads often contain information about what is available, the cost of rent, and what is included.

LEGAL INFO

The law says that a landlord **cannot refuse to rent an apartment to someone because they have children**. They can, however, refuse to rent to people with pets.

When you rent an apartment, it is usual for you to sign a **lease**. A lease is a contract stating who is renting the place, how long it will be rented for, the cost of rent each month, and which services will be paid by the tenant and landlord. By law the landlord must give the tenant a copy of the lease.

You usually have to pay a **damage deposit** when you sign a lease. A damage deposit is usually half a month's rent. If the apartment is not damaged when you move out, this money should be refunded by the landlord. If it isn't, you can apply to Residential Tenancies to get your damage deposit back.

For information on tenancy issues and contact information for Residential Tenancies, visit:
novascotia.ca/sns/access/land/residential-tenancies.asp

If you are receiving income assistance, ESIA may pay the damage deposit in some cases if the health and safety of you or your family are in question. YWCA Halifax's December 6th fund may also be able to help: ywcahalifax.com/our-focus/violence-to-resilience.html .

APARTMENT CHECKLIST

What do I want in an apartment?

When you call to ask about an apartment, you can ask about the safety of the building, the cost, whether heat and lights are included, the damage deposit fee, the amount of space, and the location of, and distance to, schools.

There are also some questions you should ask yourself when looking for an apartment, such as:

Safety

What do you need to be safe from your partner?

_____

_____

Do you need to be on the third floor or higher?

yes no

Do you need a building with security?

yes no

Cost

How much can you pay for rent?

_____

How much can you pay for heat and lights?

_____

Are heat and lights included in the rent?

yes no

Space

How many bedrooms do you need?

_____

How much space do you need?

_____

Location

How close do you need to be to work?

_____

Do you need to be close to schools?

yes no

Other options

Do you want to live alone or share an apartment?

_____

If you have children, would you like to share with another single parent?

yes no

My apartment list:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You may be eligible for basic **Income Assistance** if the income you have to pay for your basic needs is less than the amount you may receive on income assistance. The amount of assistance you receive depends on your circumstances. Find out more at: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/index.html.

Income assistance only allows a certain amount for rental costs. You can visit the Income Assistance website to find out how much assistance is available: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/BasicAssistance.html

Monthly Shelter Allowance (retrieved from: novascotia.ca/coms/employment/income_assistance/BasicAssistance.html)

Family Size	Rent or Own a Home	Boarding
1	$300*	$223
2	$570	$242
3+	$620	$282

** Up to $535 under certain circumstances*

Monthly Personal Allowance

Shelter situation	Adult	Dependent child age 18 to 20	Dependent child under 18
Rent, own home, board	$255	$255	$133 *
In hospital 30 days or more	$105	$105	Not applicable
In a residential rehabilitation program	$81	$81	Not applicable

** If you do not get the Nova Scotia Child Benefit or the National Child Benefit for a dependent child under the age of 18, you can ask for a Child Benefit Adjustment (CBA). You must file your income tax each year to get your Child Tax Benefits. Ask your caseworker for more information.*

Ending a lease early

Under a year-to-year lease, a tenant normally ends their lease by giving notice three months before the anniversary date. A fixed-term lease normally ends at the end of the term. Otherwise, the tenant is financially responsible for their rent for the period of their lease.

If you are renting a home or apartment and you experience abuse, you may be able to get out of your lease with only one month's notice without any financial penalty.

How can you end a lease early because of abuse?

If you have experienced abuse and want to end your lease early, you need to contact the Department of Justice Victim Services. You will need to fill out an application and provide one of two things:

EITHER an Emergency Protection Order that was issued during the last 90 days and that has not been overturned by the Court.

OR THE FOLLOWING THREE THINGS TOGETHER:

- a complaint about domestic abuse filed with the police that identifies you as the victim, and
- a peace bond or other court order that is currently in force that contains a no-contact order because of domestic abuse, and
- an assessment by Victim Services that says that you have been a victim of domestic abuse.

RESOURCES

For more information, or to begin your application for a **Domestic Violence Certificate**, you can contact the Nova Scotia Victim Services office in your area, visit novascotia.ca/just/victim_services/contact.asp, or call their toll-free line: 1-888-470-0773. They will help you with the application process to get a Domestic Violence Certificate and explain how you should submit her notice to your landlord.

For more information about **ending a lease early** because of abuse, you can visit: nsfamilylaw.ca/family-violence/ending-lease-early-domestic-violence-certificates

What happens to our house?

If you are married or in a Registered Domestic Partnership, you and your partner have equal legal rights to the house. If you are in a common law relationship, you may also have some entitlement to a property that you and your partner shared.

Whether you are married, in a Registered Domestic Partnership, or in a common law relationship, you should talk with a lawyer about your property rights.

RESOURCES

For information about the **differences between a marriage, a Registered Domestic Partnership, and a common law relationship**, visit the Nova Scotia Family Law website: nsfamilylaw.ca/what-are-some-differences-between-common-law-relationship-and-registered-domestic-partnership

Unless there is a court order or written agreement saying otherwise, both partners have a right to live in the matrimonial home.

If you are married or in a Registered Domestic Partnership, the house cannot be sold without your consent even if the house is in your partner's name, but you should get legal advice as soon as possible.

If you are not married or in a Registered Domestic Partnership, you only have the right to remove anything that you owned before the relationship, or bought during the relationship.

Your personal belongings remain yours. You may also take the children's belongings if they are with you.

For information about taking the children with you, see page 103.

If you cannot agree about what happens to the house, you will have to go to Court where a Judge will decide.

Can I keep my partner out of our shared home?

You can talk to your lawyer about applying to the Nova Scotia Supreme Court or Supreme Court (Family Division) to get an "exclusive possession order." The laws that apply to homes on reserves also allow you to apply for an exclusive possession order. If you live on a reserve and your partner is a member of a First Nation and you are not, you can still apply for an order.

You cannot keep your spouse or partner out of a matrimonial home without a court order such as a family court order, a peace bond, or an emergency protection order.

Your spouse or partner has no right to enter a property you have rented as long as their name is not on the lease.

RESOURCES

For information about **ending a lease early** because of abuse, see page 79.

For more information on **abuse and your rights**, visit The Nova Scotia Legal Information Society's factsheet on Domestic Violence: legalinfo.org/newcomers-to-canada/nslaw-english.html

You can also find **general information, legal FAQs, and resources** concerning abuse at the Family Law Nova Scotia website: nsfamilylaw.ca/family-violence/general-information-domestic-violence

What happens if our house is located on a reserve?

If you or your partner is a member of a First Nation and you live in a property on a reserve, different laws apply for dividing matrimonial property.

Under Canadian law, First Nation communities are allowed to create their own matrimonial property laws. If the First Nation has not made its own matrimonial property laws, there are federal laws that apply instead. These federal laws also apply to common law couples.

The division of property on a reserve depends on whether a spouse or common law partner is a member of the First Nation where the house is located. You should speak with a lawyer who can tell you how the law applies to your situation.

What if I do not have enough money?

Financial Support

If you don't have enough money, you may qualify for the **Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA)** program. The ESIA program provides income assistance for basic living needs, prescription drug coverage, and employment supports to help you work towards becoming self-sufficient. You may qualify for help from ESIA right away in an emergency situation.

To apply for ESIA, you can contact the local Department of Community Services office. *A list of offices can be found at* novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact, *and on pages 124-125 of this book.* Any information you give to ESIA will be kept confidential. A caseworker will meet with you to fill out an application and consent form and let you know if you are eligible. You can appeal any decision made about your eligibility.

If you are able to participate in employment-focused activities, ESIA staff will work with you to support your employment plan. If you are not able to participate in employment activities, staff will work with you to ensure that you receive the services you need to support yourself and your family.

If you leave your home and are expecting a cheque in the mail from your employer, EI, Income Assistance, or child and family benefits, you can call those offices and ask them not to mail your cheque to your home address. It is best if you call as soon as you can. You can have your mail sent to a new address. For a fee, the post office will re-address your mail for up to a year. It will take five to ten days for the post office to start sending your mail to your new address.

If you receive provincial and federal credits such as the Nova Scotia Child Benefit (NSCB), National Child Benefit (NCB), Goods and Service Tax Credit (GST), and the Nova Scotia Affordable Living Tax Credit (ALTC), it is important that you tell the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) about any changes in your circumstances, such as your address, your marital status, your income, or how many children you have.

RESOURCES

You can update your information with the **Canadian Revenue Agency** online (cra-arc.gc.ca/esrvc-srvcc/menu-eng.html), or by calling and speaking to a representative.

Individual income tax and trust enquiries: 1-800-959-8281

Universal child care benefit, Canada child tax benefit: 1-800-387-1193

GST/HST credit for individuals: 1-800-959-1953

Whether you leave in an emergency, for a short time, or for good, you have every right to take your children with you, especially if you think they will be in danger if they are left behind.

If you take her children with you, there may be fewer problems later. If you get a divorce or decide not to go back and you don't have your children with you, it can take months for the courts to make a decision about custody. You should get legal advice if you want to take your children out of province. *See Your Children, starting on page 97, for more information.*

Spousal Support

Spousal support/maintenance is money paid by one former partner to the other. It is often paid to help the partner who has a lower income cover their expenses. The laws about spousal support are quite complicated, and there are many different factors that Courts will take into account. You can ask your lawyer about whether you should make an application for spousal support.

More information about spousal support can be found at: nsfamilylaw.ca/spousal-support/general-information-spousal-support.

Getting a Job

There are a number of agencies throughout Nova Scotia that provide support for career planning and job searching. Some of these agencies work exclusively with women. See the resource guide at the back of this book for a list. These agencies can help you prepare to return to employment, including helping you figure out:

- how to look for work
- what skills you have
- the type of work you would like
- what jobs exist
- what job training courses are available

It can help to tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Sometimes people know about jobs you can apply for.

RESOURCES

The **Department of Community Services** has resources to help people find employment
novascotia.ca/coms/employment/employment_services/index.html

Employment Nova Scotia has free employment services across the province that offer job search help. Employment Nova Scotia or Service Canada can also provide a list of agencies where you can find help with your job search.
novascotia.ca/employmentnovascotia
servicecanada.gc.ca

YWCA Halifax provides interest-free microloans and individualized support to women who want to flee abuse, but who feel like they need to stay because of financial reasons, concerns about sustaining themselves, barriers to adequate housing, among other reasons. Women can contact YWCA Halifax.
ywcahalifax.com/our-focus/violence-to-resilience.html
902-423-6162, extension 4241 for information about eligibility and how to apply.

Legal Matters

It may be helpful
to ask friends or co-workers
for names of good lawyers.

Finding a lawyer

Professional legal advice can help you fully understand your legal rights. Lawyers can give you professional legal advice about getting a peace bond, custody of the children, separation and divorce, and other legal matters. Though you might be scared or nervous about going to a lawyer, a lawyer is there to help you if you want to explore your legal options.

RESOURCES

If you don't have a lawyer, you can call the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia's lawyer referral service ..... Toll-free 1-800-665-9779
Halifax.....902-455-3135
legalinfo.org/how-lisns-can-help/i-need-a-lawyer.html

If you can't afford a lawyer, you can contact **Nova Scotia Legal Aid** (*see page 139 for the location nearest you*). This agency may provide free legal services on family law, criminal law, and social justice matters. If you meet the income criteria and have a legal issue that Legal Aid covers, you can get full legal representation at no cost.

Legal Aid works to provide some level of service to all people in the core areas of law that they cover (criminal, family, and social justice). Even if you do not qualify financially you may receive some level of service. This could range from summary advice (that is, brief, basic legal advice) from a Legal Aid lawyer in the office to full representation in Court by a Legal Aid lawyer.

In some situations, Legal Aid may also enter into repayment agreements for people who don't qualify but would not otherwise be able to afford to hire a private lawyer. Legal Aid would consider the person's specific circumstances (for example, whether that person has experienced abuse).

You can call your local Legal Aid office for more information or to book an appointment. You can also apply for Legal Aid online at nslegalaid.ca/onlineapplication.php.

Legal Aid can't work for both you and your partner. If your partner calls first, the lawyers there can't help you, but they can provide a Legal Aid certificate, which you can take to another lawyer if you qualify for aid.

Find the Legal Aid office nearest you at: nslegalaid.ca/contact.php

You can also talk to summary advice lawyers who work at the family courts throughout the province. The **Summary Advice Counsel** is a court-based service provided by Legal Aid in Supreme Court Family Division and Family Courts throughout Nova Scotia. It is separate from the summary legal advice provided by Legal Aid lawyers in their offices. These lawyers help people who need advice on family law matters but do not have a lawyer of their own. They provide basic legal advice free of charge, regardless of income level.

You can find contact information for the summary advice lawyer nearest you at: nsfamilylaw.ca/services/court/summary-advice-counsel

You should not sign any papers that might affect your legal rights until you speak to a lawyer.

A lawyer may ask you for:

- your marriage certificate or proof of registration for your Registered Domestic Partnershipthe lease, deed, or mortgage to your house
- your partner's most recent pay stubs or income tax return
- your income tax return
- bank statements
- immigration papers/passport
- a written record of your partner's abusive actions
- any court orders and notice of court applications

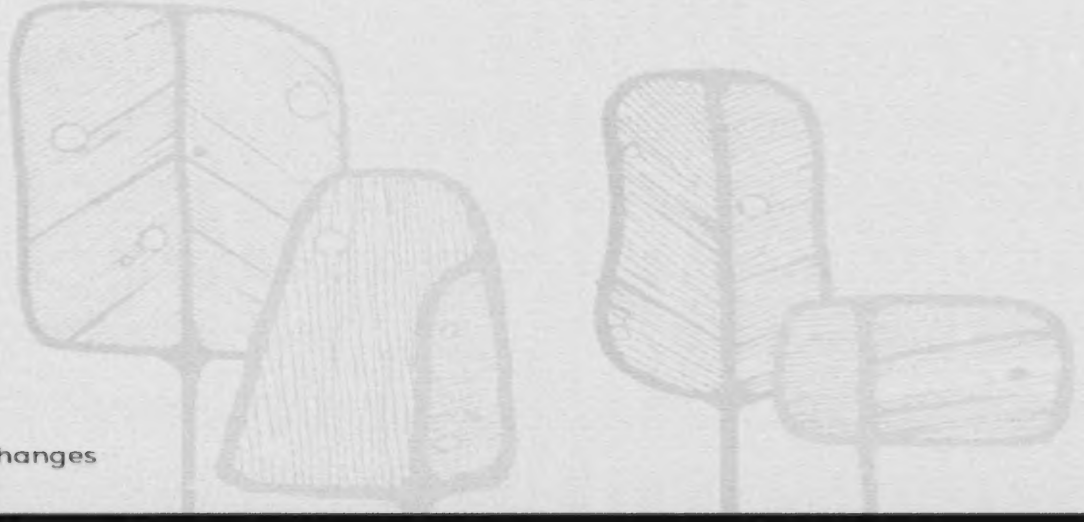
Lawyers are paid by the hour. Depending on the circumstances, lawyers may require a deposit from you. This deposit is called a retainer.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR LAWYER CHECKLIST

When you see a lawyer, you may find it useful to bring a list of questions and as much information with you as you can.

Here are some issues you may want to discuss with the lawyer:

- legal fees
- custody and access to the children
- who can take the children
- spousal support and child support
- applying for income assistance
- managing debts and assets
- what money is yours
- separation and divorce
- property rights
- concerns about your immigration status
- who has rights to the house and belongings that you and your partner shared
- going to Court and what to expect in Court
- what the Judge will ask
- whether you should apply for a Peace Bond or an Emergency Protection Order
- whether you or your partner can leave the province or country



Where can I find out more?

There is information on legal matters throughout this book. You can refer to the table of contents for where to find information about particular topics (for example, information about criminal charges, getting a Peace Bond or Emergency Protection Order, ending a lease early because of domestic abuse, child protection issues, child support, property issues, and spousal support).

See page 89 for information about Legal Aid and what services it provides. The following section provides information about other legal resources and getting a lawyer.

Getting information

The **Family Law Nova Scotia** website is a good resource for legal information on family law matters. Transition houses are also good resources for information on police procedures, how the justice system works, and legal matters. The staff at the transition house can also help you access legal advice. You can contact a transition house for help even if you are not staying there.

RESOURCES

Family Law Nova Scotia: nsfamilylaw.ca

Transitions House Association of Nova Scotia: thans.ca

More information about the law, lawyers, and legal matters is available from the **Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS)**: legalinfo.org

If you need legal information and resources in French, you can contact the Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse (AJEFNE). Through its bilingual Justice Access Centre, AJEFNE provides free legal information in person, by telephone, and online. You can contact AJEFNE at 902-433-2085 or visit their website: ajefne.ns.ca

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS)

LISNS provides legal information to members of the public including:

A lawyer referral service

Private lawyers who are part of the Lawyer Referral Service offer an initial consultation of up to 30 minutes for a fee of $20 plus tax.

Call Monday to Friday 9:30 am-1 pm, and 2pm - 4:30 pm
Halifax Regional Municipality.....902-455-3135
.....Toll-free (NS) 1-800-665-9779
Messages for return phone calls are not accepted.

A Legal Information Line

Through the Legal Information Line people can get free legal information from a Legal Information Counsellor, or use their Lawyer Referral Service to find a lawyer who can give legal advice. You can call the line Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. If you can't get through, the Legal Information Line Counsellors are on the phone speaking with someone else, so please try again later.

Dial-a-Law

You will get a recording giving basic legal information provided by the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (legalinfo.org). This service is available 24 hours a day by calling 902-420-1888 (not toll free), or through audio files on the LISNS website.
legalinfo.org/how-lisns-can-help/dial-a-law.html

Some RCMP and police offices have **Victim Services** which provide information and support to people who have been abused. Victim services also provide information about community resources and what to expect as the case moves through the justice system.

There are also provincial Victim Services offices in four regions of the province. These offices serve all of Nova Scotia, and are a service of the provincial Department of Justice. Staff at these offices can answer questions about your case and the criminal justice process, keep you informed of court proceedings, and help you prepare to testify in Court.

RESOURCES

Help on family law matters is also available in Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipality at **Family Law Information Program Centres** at the Family Division of the Supreme Court. nsfamilylaw.ca/services/court/family-law-information-centre

Brochures on legal information for newcomers and immigrants experiencing abuse are available in eight languages from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia. legalinfo.org/i-have-a-legal-question/newcomers-to-canada

Your Children

children

Throughout this text, we follow the definition of the child in Nova Scotia to mean a person under sixteen years of age (see the Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act, Section 3(1)(e)).

At the time of this book's publication, this definition is current. However, Bill 112: An Act to Amend Chapter 5 of the Acts of 1990, the Children and Family Services Act, is currently being reviewed. If this Bill is passed, it will change the definition of child to mean a person under eighteen years of age.

Children often see and hear more than we think. They have probably seen or heard the abuse, and it will likely have affected them.

Children who are exposed to abuse can be as severely affected as children who are direct victims of physical or sexual abuse. They might:

- be scared, confused, and unhappy
- have physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches
- blame themselves
- experience insomnia, nightmares, or bed-wetting
- have speech difficulties or stop talking
- harm or cut themselves
- behave aggressively or become withdrawn
- cling to their mother or try to take care of her
- exhibit disrespectful or abusive behaviour towards their mother
- feel responsible for the abuse
- seek punishment by lying or stealing (because they believe punishment means love)

When children experience abuse in their home life even at a young age, this puts them at risk of getting stuck in a cycle of abuse.

Children who are exposed to abuse often believe that it's alright to hurt people they love. They learn that it's normal for someone who loves them to hurt them.

Children from violent homes may end up believing that:

- it's okay to hit, boss, or control their partners
- abuse is normal
- abuse is a way to win arguments and get your own way
- it's okay to bully and control women
- women are naturally inferior to men
- women have to put up with abuse to be in a relationship
- "real men" don't feel or show weakness, fear, sadness, or confusion
- adults have power they often misuse
- all men are bullies who push women and children around, and women are weak and can be pushed around
- punishment means love
- women can't take care of themselves or their children
- you can only express anger through aggression and abuse.

LEGAL INFO

If a child sees a parent being abused, this may be considered child abuse under the laws of Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act (1991) recognizes that when a child repeatedly witnesses abuse, this is a form of child abuse.

Anyone who suspects that a child is being abused is required by law to report it. Child protection officers are required by law to remove the child from the home if they believe the child needs protection from the abuse.

The safety of children is always a priority for people who work with victims of abuse. In some cases, however, domestic abuse outreach services and transition house staff may not be required to report to Child Protection. If you contact domestic abuse outreach services, go to a transition house, or leave your abusive partner, you may be seen as having taken necessary steps to protect you and your children from the abuse.

If you return to the abusive situation and/or put your children in harm's way again, domestic abuse outreach services and transition houses will be required to report to Child Protection.

Bullying and being bullied

Children who are exposed to abuse may become insecure and be at risk of bullying or cyber bullying. They may also become bullies themselves.

Bullying is when someone repeatedly tries to hurt another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation, or property.

It is also bullying to help or encourage someone to bully another person.

Bullying is an expression of aggression and an abuse of power that is similar to the abuse your children witness at home.

Help for children and youth

Children and youth who are exposed to abuse are probably confused, scared, and angry. They may need help dealing with their feelings.

Children need to know that:

- they are safe and will stay safe
- the abuse is not their fault
- they are loved
- it's alright to feel whatever they are feeling
- it's okay to talk about it
- they will be listened to and understood
- it's not okay for them to abuse.

Your children may need to know it is still okay to love their other parent, but they also need to understand that the parent's abusive behaviour is not acceptable. They need to know that you are alright even if you cry or get upset.

Remember: children show their anger and fear to the people they trust, and need to learn how to express their feelings without abuse.

Children may need someone to blame. They may see you as the one to blame because you are the one who left or reported the abuse. Perhaps they often saw your partner blame you for things, and so they do the same.

It can be difficult for you if your children blame you. You will need to have patience in order to help your children understand why change is necessary.

What about custody of the children?

It's important to get legal advice right away regarding child custody. If you want custody of your children, an application for a custody order should be made right away.

Under the laws of Nova Scotia, the most important consideration in custody arrangements is what would be in the best interest of the child. Abuse is one of the factors a Judge will look at in order to decide what is in a child's best interests.

Usually an application for custody must be made at the Court closest to where the children normally live. The Justice Centre in your area can provide the name and location of the Court where you can start the application.

Court Staff can give you information about the documents you need to apply for a custody order. It is best if you speak to a lawyer before you start your application, but you can get a lawyer at any time during the court process, even if you start the application on your own.

If your partner does not abide by the terms of the custody order, you should contact your lawyer and the police.

RESOURCES

For more information about custody and access, you can refer to the Family Law Nova Scotia website: nsfamilylaw.ca/custody-access/information-about-custody-and-access/faqs

If you are afraid that your partner may try to take the children to another country, you can ask the passport office to put the children's names on a security list so that you are called if your partner tries to get a passport for them.

You can apply in person or by mail and must provide:

- your own ID,
- the children's birth certificates,
- court documents (such as custody orders, Peace Bonds, etc.), and
- a letter explaining why you want the children's names on the security list.

The passport office usually keeps names on this list for 90 days only. After that you must reapply or provide related court documentation.

To find the passport office nearest you, visit cic.gc.ca/english/passport.index.asp.

If your children have another nationality and you are concerned that your partner will try to take them to another country, you can contact the embassy or consulate and ask them to refuse to issue passports for the children. (*Consulate and embassy phone numbers can be found in the government blue pages in the phone book, or at* travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates).

Supervised access and exchange

Courts will often decide that it is in the child's best interests to continue their relationship with both parents. In some cases, a Judge might decide that a child should get to see a parent only under the close supervision of an independent, neutral third party. **Supervised access** allows children to have visits with their non-custodial parent (i.e. the parent who doesn't have primary custody) under the supervision of trained staff from community agencies.

Supervised exchange is different than supervised access. Supervised exchange refers to the supervision of the child being dropped off or getting picked up between the care of the custodial and non-custodial parent. Supervised exchange allows drop off and pick up to take place without the parents having to meet. *To find out more about the different types of exchange, visit* nsfamilylaw.ca/custody-access/information-about-custody-and-access/faqs#404

Safety is the top priority in supervised access and exchange. Referrals to the court-based Supervised Access and Exchange Program happen only through a court order.

The Supervised Access and Exchange Program provides a safe, neutral and child-focused setting in which supervised visits or exchanges can take place. These supervised visits or exchange happen for specified periods of time and in appropriate cases.

The Department of Justice considers supervised access and exchange to be a short term and transitional service for families. The service is generally limited to 20 hours per case, but an extension of the service may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Supervised Access and Exchange Programs currently operate in Halifax, Sydney, Kentville, Pictou, and Bridgewater.

For more information about the Supervised Access and Exchange Program visit:
nsfamilylaw.ca/sites/default/files/video/supervised_access_bench_bar_brochure_for_web_doj2.pdf
and
nsfamilylaw.ca/sites/default/files/video/supervised_access_parent_brochure_rev.pdf

Child support

If you have your children with you, you are entitled to apply for child support/maintenance from their other parent.

You must make every effort to get a **maintenance order** or **maintenance agreement** for yourself and/or the children if you apply for Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA). *For more information, visit:* novascotia.ca/coms/employment/index.html.

Any maintenance payments that you receive will be counted as income towards your income assistance payment.

You can apply for maintenance yourself through the **Family Court**. Transition house staff can provide you with information and may be able to help you apply. The Court will work out the amount of support to be paid. Support payments can also be worked out during a divorce proceeding.

You should try to get legal advice about child support. The Court can only work out the amount of child support if the other parent provides their financial information. If it is difficult to get this information from your partner, you can speak to a lawyer for help.

If you do not have a maintenance order or if your child support/ maintenance payments are believed to be too low, you may be referred to the **Family Maintenance Income Support Program**, which is part of ESIA. They will work with you to get a fair payment. They may help you work out a voluntary agreement so you don't have to go to Court. In some cases where there has been abuse, the ESIA program may take a different approach if there is evidence of increased risk of abuse for you or your children.

Maintenance Enforcement Program

Once you get a **child support order**, you should receive money for the children regularly (usually every month). When this order is put in place, the Court will automatically register it with the Department of Justice Maintenance Enforcement Program. The role of this program is to make sure you get your child support payments and/or spousal support payments.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program will register your file as a "caution" case if they are aware that you have been abused by your partner, if there are concerns for your safety, or if you have a Peace Bond in place. This means they will notify you when they contact your partner.

If your abusive partner threatens you or tells you to withdraw from the program, you can contact the police and tell Maintenance Enforcement. Staff will work with you to keep your payments intact.

If you receive income assistance and your support payments are irregular or not being paid, you can sign an Assignment of Maintenance form with your ESIA caseworker. This will allow the Department of Community Services to track and collect your maintenance payments for you. This means that if your partner is not making payments regularly or not making payments at all, ESIA will not include the support payments as income towards the income assistance that you receive.

You may want to open a personal bank account at a new bank and arrange for your cheques to be deposited directly. Your partner will not be able to access the money in your personal account.

Neighbours, Families, Friends, and Co-workers

The following section provides information and suggestions for friends, family, neighbours, and co-workers of people who have experienced abuse. This section will sometimes refer to women as those who have experienced abuse. This is because women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. However, many of the points below may be equally valid about anyone you know who has experienced abuse.

There are steps you can take if you suspect someone you know is abusing their partner or suspect someone you know is being abused. *See "Understanding Abuse", starting on page 2, to learn about different forms of abuse.*

Remember: it is against the law for children to be exposed to abuse. If you know of a child who you think may need protection because they are experiencing or seeing abuse, it is your duty to report this to Child Protection Services.

Deal with your thoughts and fears

Sometimes the abusive person feels ashamed about their abusive behaviour. You need to approach them with the assumption that they would prefer to have a relationship without abuse.

Sometimes both partners are ashamed about the abuse. This can lead them to minimize the seriousness of the abuse, or even deny that it is happening.

Sometimes the abusive person is confused about who is responsible for their choice to abuse. Sometimes they want to stop their abusive behaviour, but think that it is the abused partner's responsibility to stop it. Sometimes they say things like, "If she disrespects me, then I will disrespect her", "She made me do it", or "She drove me to it".

Sometimes women who have experienced abuse are also confused about who is responsible. They may blame themselves for their partner's abusive behaviour. It is not the abused partner's fault. There is no excuse for abuse. If one partner is being disrespectful or abusive, it does not give the other partner the right to abuse or be disrespectful toward them.

Often people who abuse are not abusive all the time. They can also be respectful and caring to their partners, family and friends. People often think a person who is like this could never be abusive. It can be confusing to friends and family to learn that a person they know as loving and caring has been abusive towards their partner.

Friends and family may think the abuse can't be serious if she stays with her partner. Read pages 60-62 to understand why women stay with a person who abuses, and how difficult it can be for women to make changes. Many women love their partners and they simply want the abuse to stop. It may be helpful to read pages 109-116 about how to be a good support person.

Prepare yourself before you offer support

Learning about abuse against women and the supports available by reading this book is a good place to start. It is important to be supportive, but it is also very important to get the professional assistance needed. It can be helpful to talk to a counselor who works with these issues, especially for long-term support. Contact a transition house (women's shelter) in your area to talk to someone about how you can help. You do not have to share your identity.

RESOURCES

Neighbours, Friends and Families is a public education awareness program with a toll-free information line to help people learn about the signs of abuse and what can be done to prevent further abuse.

Call 1-855-225-0220, or visit the Domestic Violence Resource Centre (nsdomesticviolence.ca) for information about this program.

Let her know you are there for her

Asking someone if they are being abused can be very uncomfortable but often it takes no more than asking "Do you need to talk?" or saying "I've been worried about you".

Never tell your friend or family member what she should do. She has to make that choice for herself. You can make suggestions and ask her what she thinks. If you are unsure what this person wants from you, ask.

Know that you are not responsible for her choices. What she does is her choice. Telling her to leave does not help. Don't take the credit or the blame for her decisions.

Be a good listener

Being a good listener can be emotionally demanding. Details about abuse are often painful. You have to be balanced and stable yourself, and able to handle your friend or relative's stories and emotional turmoil. Your job is to be there for her, to just listen. By listening, you can help her work through what is happening and the impact it is having on her and her children. You can affirm that the abuse is not her fault.

Patience is essential when supporting a woman who is being abused. Making changes is a process, not a single act: often it takes months, or even years. Your friend or relative may talk for a very long time before she acts to change or leave her relationship.

Help her make a safety plan if she wants one

Your friend or family member may need to plan an escape route, know where she would go in an emergency, and how she would get there.

See pages 29-51 for information on safety planning.

Encourage her to call police if she is being threatened or hurt. Officers are trained to handle abuse cases and have procedures they must follow. Some departments have Victim Support Units.

See pages 34-43 of this book to find out what will happen if she or a neighbour calls the police.

Let her know help is available

Let your friend or family member know that she can get help and support from a counselor, and that there are programs that can help her partner stop the abusive behavior. The Directory in this book has lists of support agencies and programs.

Go with her to appointments

Your support will mean a great deal, even if it is simply accompanying your friend or relative to appointments.

Talking to doctors, police, and lawyers can be a scary experience. So can attending Court. Offer to go with her as a support person.

If she wants to leave, help her find a safe place to go

Think carefully before you offer your home. Having a woman and her children live with you can be extremely stressful.

Help your friend or relative connect with counselors at a local shelter to discuss her options before you make any decisions.

Be aware of her needs

Your friend or relative may have specific needs. She may have experienced racism or felt excluded and isolated in the past when thinking about getting help. This may make her reluctant to turn to particular organizations or people for support.

Read pages 16-28 to see if any of the information applies to your friend or family member. You may be able to help her find support from someone who understands her special needs.

Do's and don'ts when offering support

You can help your friend or family member and her partner learn about what supports are available to them. You can listen and support both of them. You can give them information about abuse and what is considered criminal behavior.

At the same time, you cannot make decisions for them. You cannot assume you know better than they do what is best for them. You may think you know what is best for your friend or family member, her partner, and the children. However, it is up to your friend of family member to decide for themselves what they want to do.

Don't blame your friend or family member for her partner's choice to use abuse. Even if she has made poor choices in the relationship, she is not responsible for her partner's choices.

You can encourage your friend or family to take responsibility for her own choices, but not her partner's choices. Many women say that their friends or relatives offered practical support that helped them, but being blamed for their partners' choices made them feel worse.

Don't say, "I told you so." Resist the urge to say, "I knew this would happen." No one wants to hear that, and it isn't helpful.

Don't make judgmental statements. Many women say that they didn't tell someone about the abuse because they heard statements such as, "I think some women like being controlled by a strong man," or, "No man would ever get away with abusing me!"

Do take care of yourself. Be aware that your friend or relative's abuse may trigger memories of your own. If this happens, you should consider helping her find support from someone else.

Do find a support person for yourself. Find someone you can talk to about your own feelings, but be careful not to betray your friend or relative's confidences.

Sometimes the abusive person will feel threatened by your conversations with the person experiencing the abuse. In these situations, it can be helpful to reach out to the abusive partner to find out how they might be supported as well. Often a woman will know whether or not it is safe to reach out to support her abusive partner. Many women want this person to have support even if they are no longer together in a relationship.

Call the police if you are being threatened in any way.

Resources

Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

Safety Alert

If you have experienced domestic abuse, know that you are not alone, and that there are a variety of supports available to you.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are seeking help or are looking for information about abuse, you can call the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia's 24-hour toll-free line**:
1 855 225 0220

You can also contact the local transition house (women's shelter) in your area (see page 150 of this book for a complete list).

Your local number:

_____

For more information and resources, visit the **Domestic Violence Resource Centre website**:
nsdomesticviolence.ca

Quick connect

Community and social services 211
ns.211.ca

HealthLink 811
Hearing impaired 711
811.novascotia.ca

Help Lines

Cape Breton/Sydney
6 pm–midnight 902-562-4357
. . . . . Toll-free 1-800-957-9995

Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477

Halifax Regional Municipality Mental Health Mobile
Crisis Team 902-429-8167
. . . . . Toll-free 1-888-429-8167

Pictou County
noon–midnight/7 days a week 902-752-5952

Kids Help Phone . . . . . Toll-free 1-800-668-6868

Mental Health Crisis Line (24/7) 1-888-429-8167

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, Halifax
Crisis Line 902-425-0122

Transition Houses and Shelters Crisis Lines

Amherst 902-667-1200
Antigonish 902-863-3807
Bridgewater, Harbour House 902-543-3999
Digby, Juniper House 902-742-8689
Halifax, Byrony House 902-422-7650
Kentville, Chrysalis House 902-679-1922
New Glasgow, Tearmann House 902-752-0132
Port Hawkesbury, Leeside Transition House
. 902-625-2444
Sydney, Cape Breton Transition House
. 902-539-2945
. . . . . Toll-free 1-800-563-2945
Truro, Third Place 902-893-3232
Yarmouth, Juniper House 902-742-8689

Cut or tear along this line. Fold up and keep in a safe place.

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African Nova Scotian Women

African United Baptist Women's Institute 902-752-4978

Association of Black Social Workers 902-407-8809
nsabsw.ca

Black Educators Association 902-424-7036
.....Toll-free 1-800-565-3398
theblackeducators.ca

Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association 902-661-1509
cansa.ca

Children Services

Child Benefits

Nova Scotia Child Benefit .....Toll-free 1-800-387-1193
novascotia.ca/coms/families/ChildBenefit.html

Child Care Information and Subsidies

Child Care Connections-NS..... 902-423-8199
.....Toll-free 1-800-565-8199

Day Care Subsidy Program 902-424-6679
cccns.org

Child Protection, Family and Children's Services Department of Community Services

Call Community Services if you believe a child is in immediate danger.

Weekdays, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm .....Toll-free 1-877-424-1177
Weekends and holidays, 4:30 pm - 8:30 am .....Toll-free 1-866-922-2434
novascotia.ca/coms

Regional Offices

novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/index.html

Central Region

Central Halifax 902-424-5420
Cole Harbour 902-435-7472
Dartmouth 902-424-3298
Halifax 902-425-5420
Sackville 902-869-3600
Sheet Harbour 902-885-2974

Eastern Region

Cape Breton-Victoria 902 563-3400
Eastern regional office 902-563-3302
Glace Bay 902-842-4000
Inverness Richmond 902 625-0660
North Sydney 902-563-3300
Port Hawksbury 902-625-0660
Sydney 902-563-3300

Northern Region

Regional office 902-755-7023
Antigonish 902-863-3213
Colchester County 902-893-5950
Cumberland County 902-667-3336
East Hants (Elmsdale) 902-883-3539
Hants County 902-798-2289
Guysborough 902-533-4007
New Glasgow 902-755-7363
Pictou 902-755-5950
Shubenacedie 902-758-3553
..... Toll-free 1-800-263-8686

Western Region

Regional office 902-679-6715
Annapolis 902-532-2337
Digby 902-245-5811
Head office 902-679-6725
Kings County 902-678-6176
Lunenburg County 902-543-4554
Queens County 902-354-3525
Shelburne County 902-637-2337
Yarmouth County 902-742-0700

Children with Special Needs

Progress Centre for Early Intervention
3530 Novalea Drive, Halifax 902-423-2686
progresscentre.com

Counselling Services for Children

IWK Community Mental Health
iwk.nshealth.ca/mental-health
Intake 902-464-4110
..... Toll-free 1-888-470-5888

Clinics
Dartmouth 902-469-8170
Halifax 902-422-1611
Sackville 902 864-8668

Kids Help Phone ..... Toll-free 1-800-668-6868
kidshelpphone.ca

Counselling

Family Service Association, Central intake
Halifax and Lower Sackville 902-420-1980
..... Toll-free 1-888-886-5552
fshalifax.com

Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia ..... Toll-free 1-866-330-5952
fsens.ns.ca

Criminal Injuries Counselling Program
Phone services 902-424-4651
..... Toll-free 1-888-470-0773
General inquiries 902-424-3309
novascotia.ca/just/victim_services/programs.asp#CICP

Employment

Employment Outreach Agencies

Ann Terry Outreach Project
Sydney 902-539-0404
annterryproject.com

Women's Employment Outreach (W.E.O.)
Halifax 902-422-8023
womensemploymentoutreach.org

Service Canada Centres (HRDC)

servicecanada.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc-srch.cgi?ln=eng

Employment Insurance (EI) ..... Toll-free 1-800-206-7218

CPP/Old Age Security ..... Toll-free 1-800-277-9914

All other inquiries ..... Toll-free 1-800-622-6232

Employment Support and Income Assistance
Department of Community Services

novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/index.html

Central Regional Office
Halifax 902-424-5074

Central Region District Offices
Halifax ..... 902-424-4150 / 902-424-6111
Cole Harbour 902-435-7472
Dartmouth 902-424-1600
Sackville 902-869-3600
Sheet Harbour 902-885-2974

Eastern Regional Office
Sydney 902-563-3302

Eastern Region District Offices
Glace Bay 902-842-4000
North Sydney 902-794-5110
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-0660
Sydney 902-563-3300

Northern Regional Office
New Glasgow 902-755-7023

Northern Region District Offices

Antigonish 902-863-3213
Colchester 902-893-5950
Cumberland 902-667-3336
East Hants (Elmsdale) 902 883-3539
Guysborough 902-533-4007
New Glasgow 902-755-7363

Western Region

Regional office 902-679-6715

Western Regional District Offices

Annapolis 902-532-2337
Digby 902-245-5811
Hants 902-798-8319
Kings 902-678-6176
Lunenburg 902-543-5527
Middleton 902-825-3481
..... Toll-free 1-800-564-3483
Queens 902-354-2771
Shelburne 902-637-2335
Yarmouth 902-742-0741

Family Courts

novascotia.ca/just/court_services/justice_centres.asp

Family Court Office

Pictou 902-485-7350
Truro 902-893-5840

Family Division

Yarmouth 902-742-0550

Justice Centre and Family Court Office

Amherst 902-667-2256
Antigonish 902-863-7312
Bridgewater 902-543-4679
Kentville 902-679-6075
Yarmouth 902-742-0500

Justice Centre

Digby/Annapolis 902-245-4567

Supreme Court (Family Division)

Halifax 902-424-3990
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-2665
Sydney 902-563-2200

Family Resources

Antigonish and Pictou Counties

Kids First Family Resource Centre

Antigonish 902-863-3848
Pictou County 902-755-5437
kids1st.ca

Cape Breton

CUPW-UPCE Special Needs and Moving On Projects

Baddeck 902-295-1357

Family Place Resource Centre

Inverness 902-258-3002
Sydney 902-562-5616
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-1496
Neil's Harbour 902-336-2208
Baddeck 902-295-2956
Victoria County, North of Smokey 902-336-2208
Victoria County, South of Smokey 902-295-2956
familyplace.ca

Family Resource Centre

New Waterford 902-862-7140

Military Family Resource Centre

Sydney 902-563-7100
halifaxmfrc.ca

Colchester and Cumberland County

Maggie's Place

Amherst 902-667-7250
Truro 902-895-0200
maggiesplace.ca

Digby, Yarmouth, and Shelbourne Counties

Digby County Family Resource Centre

Digby 902-245-6464

Le Centre provincial de ressources prescolaires

Saulnierville 902-769-5850
cprps.ca

Kings Street Centre Family Resource Centre
Shelburne 902-875-3256

Parent's Place
Yarmouth 902-749-1718
parentsplaceyarmouth.org

Halifax and Guysborough Counties
(excluding Halifax Regional Municipality)

Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre
Porters Lake 902-827-1461
..... Toll-free 1-866-847-1461
esfamily.org

Kids First Family Resource Centre
Guysborough ..... Toll-free 1-888-533-3881
kids1st.ca

Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre 902-384-2794

Halifax Regional Municipality

Bayers Westwood Family Support Resource Centre
Halifax 902-454-9444
bayerswestwoodfrc.com

Chebucto Family Centre: Home of the Guardian Angel 902-479-3031
homeoftheguardianangel.ca

Dartmouth Family Resource Centre 902-464-8234
dartmouthfamilycentre.ca

Fairview Family Centre 902-443-9569
ffcns.ca

Family SOS
Halifax 902-455-5515
familysos.ca

Lower Sackville: Memory Lane Family Place 902-864-6363
memorylanefamilyplace.com

Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre 902-422-7850

Military Family Resource Centre
CFB Halifax 902-427-7788
CFB Shearwater 902-720-1885
halifaxmfrc.ca

Mulgrave Park Tenants Association 902-453-9273

PACT: Parent and Child Together
Dartmouth 902-434-8952
Parent Resource Centre 902-492-0133
parentsandchildrentogether.info

Kings and Annapolis Counties

Kids Action Program
Canning 902-582-1375

Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre 902-765-5611
cg.cfpsa.ca/cg-pc/greenwood/en/familyservices/militaryfamilyresourcecentre

Kings County Family Support Centre
Kentville 902-678-5760
kcfrc.ca

Family Matters – The Annapolis County Family
Lawrencetown, Resource Centre..... 902-584-2210
.....Toll-free 1-800-399-7119
family-matters.ca

Family Resource Centre of West Hants
Windsor 902-798-5961
frcofwh.webs.com

Lunenburg and Queens Counties

Bridgewater: Family Support Centre..... 902-543-1301

Chester: Chester and Area Family Resource Centre 902-275-4347
chesterfamilycentre.ca

Liverpool: Queens Family Resource Centre 902-354-2382
southshorefamilyresource.org

New Ross: Family Resource Centre 902-689-2414

Francophonie Women

Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Dartmouth 902-433-2088
ffane.ca

Government Departments, Programs, and Services

Federal Government

Information line 1-800-622-6232
..... TTY/TDD 1-800-926-9105

Provincial Government

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
..... 902-424-8662
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-8662
women.gov.ns.ca

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
..... 902-424-4111
..... Toll-free 1-877-269-7699
humanrights.gov.ns.ca

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
..... 902-424-5230
..... Toll-free (NS) 1-877-292-9597
novascotiaimmigration.com

Nova Scotia Ombudsman's Office
..... 902-424-6780
..... Toll-free 1-800-670-1111
novascotia.ca/ombu

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
Inquiries about government programs and services
..... Toll-free 1-800-670-4357
novascotia.ca/sns

Health

Addiction/Drug Dependency Services

Choices Adolescent Program: Halifax 902-491-2401
..... Toll-free 1-888-470-5888
iwk.nshealth.ca/mental-health/youth/choices-addictions

Marguerite Centre
General information line, Halifax 902-876-0006
themargueritecentre.com

Matrix Women's Services
Halifax 902-424-5920
Dartmouth 902-424-5623
Pictou 902-485-4335
Sydney 902-563-2050
Yarmouth 902-742-2406
Truro 902-893-5900

Provincial Addiction Services Offices
novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/addiction-services-offices.asp

Annapolis and Kings Counties
avdha.nshealth.ca/mental-health-addiction-services

Annapolis County 902 825-4825
Kentville 902-679-2392
King's County 902-679-2870
Middleton 902-825-6828

Cape Breton County, Northern and Central Inverness County and Victoria County
addictionservicescb.com/Services

Intake, Sydney ..... 902-563-2718 / 902-563-2583
Day program, Sydney ..... 902-563-2458 / 902-563-2547

Colchester County, Cumberland County and Municipality of East Hants
cha.nshealth.ca/addiction

Amherst (outpatient) 902-755-7017
East Hants ..... 902-883-0295 / 902-893-5526
New Glasgow (outpatient) 902-755-7017
Pictou (inpatient) 902-485-4335
Springhill (inpatient) 902-597-8647
Truro 902-893-5526

Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth Counties
swndha.nshealth.ca/pages/addictions.htm

Digby. 902-245-5888
Yarmouth. 902- 742-2406

Guysborough, Antigonish and Richmond Counties and the southern portion of Inverness County . . . . . Toll-free 1-888-291-3535
gasha.nshealth.ca/programs/communityhealth/addictionservices

Halifax Regional Municipality and Hants County. 902-424-8866
cdha.nshealth.ca/addictions-program

Lunenburg and Queens Counties 902-543-5400
southshorehealth.ca/programs-and-services/addiction-mental-health/mental-health-home

General Health Services

Health Link . . . . . dial 811

IWK Health Centre, Halifax. 902-470-8888

North End Community Health Centre, Halifax 902-420-0303
nechc.com

Public Health Services, Halifax. 902- 481-5800

Housing

Housing Services Offices

Contact Housing Services about home improvement loans, grants, and other financial assistance programs related to improving or developing housing. For issues related to public housing, please contact the Housing Authority office, listed on page 137, nearest you.

novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/HousingServicesOffices.html

Central Region

Halifax 902-424-5110
..... Toll-free 1-800-774-5130

Eastern Region (Cape Breton)

Sydney 902-563-2120
..... Toll-free 1-800-567-2135

Northern Region

Amherst 902-667-1161
New Glasgow 902-755-5065
..... Toll-free 1-800-933-2101
Truro 902-893-5999

Western Region

Bridgewater 902-543-7336
..... Toll-free 1-800-278-2144
Middleton 902-825-3481
..... Toll-free 1-800-564-3483

Regional Housing Authorities

Regional Housing Authorities can provide information about subsidized housing in your area. Also check at your local transition house about second stage housing.

novascotia.ca/coms/department/contact/HousingAuthorityOffices.html

Cape Breton Island Housing Authority

Includes Cape Breton, Richmond, Inverness, and Victoria counties
902- 539-8520
Toll-free 1-800-565-3135

Cobequid Service Area

Amherst and Cumberland County. 902-667-8757
Toll-free 1-800-934-2445
Truro and Colchester County 902-893-7235
Toll-free 1-877-846-0440

Eastern Mainland Service Area

Includes Antigonish, Guysborough, and Pictou Counties. . . . 902-752-1225
Toll-free 1-800-933-2101

Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority Service Area

Includes Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and County. 902-420-6000
Toll-free 1-800-565-8859

Western Regional Housing Authority

Includes Annapolis Valley Service Area: Annapolis, Kings, and Hants counties.
Head office. 902-681-3179
Toll-free 1-800-441-0447
Bridgewater 902-543-8200
Toll-free 1-888-845-7208
Middleton 902-825-3481
Toll-free 1-800-564-3483
Yarmouth 902-742-4369
Toll-free 1-800-306-3331

Housing Nova Scotia

housing.novascotia.ca/housing-authorities

Immigrant and Migrant Women

Citizenship and Immigration Canada ..... Toll-free 1-888-242-2100
..... TTY 1-888-576-8502
cic.gc.ca/english

Halifax Refugee Clinic 902-422-6736
halifaxrefugeeclinic.org

Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia 902-423-3607
isans.ca

Nova Scotia Interpreting Services 902-425-5532
interpretingservices.ca/

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 902-424-5230
..... Toll-free (NS) 1-877-292-9597
novascotiaimmigration.ca

YMCA Immigrant Centre 902-457-9622

Legal

Besides the services listed below, transition houses can often help you with information about the court process and other legal matters.

Legal Aid

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

nslegalaid.ca

Amherst 902-667-7544
..... Toll-free 1-866-999-7544
Annapolis Royal 902-532-2311
..... Toll-free 1-866-532-2311
Antigonish 902-863-3350
..... Toll-free 1-866-439-1544
Bridgewater 902-543-4658
..... Toll-free 1-866-543-4658
Dartmouth 902-420-7921
..... Toll-free 1-877-420-7921
Halifax, North 902-420-3450
..... Toll-free 1-866-420-3450
Halifax, South 902-420-6583
..... Toll-free 1-877-777-6583
Kentville 902-679-6110
..... Toll-free 1-866-679-6110
New Glasgow 902-755-7020
..... Toll-free 1-877-755-7020
Port Hawkesbury 902-625-4047
..... Toll-free 1-888-817-0116
Sydney 902-563-2295
..... Toll-free 1-877-563-2295
Truro 902-893-5920
..... Toll-free 1-877-777-5920
Windsor 902-798-8397
..... Toll-free 1-866-798-8397
Yarmouth 902-742-7827
..... Toll-free 1-866-742-3300

Dalhousie Legal Aid

Halifax 902-423-8105
dal.ca/faculty/law/dlas.html

Legal and Justice Support Services

Coverdale Courtwork Services / Supporting women through the justice system
Halifax. 902- 422-6417
coverdale.ca

Elizabeth Fry Society / For women in conflict with the law
Halifax. 902-454-5041
. . . . . Toll-free 1-877-619-1354
Cape Breton. 902-539-6165
caefs.ca

Legal Information and Lawyer Referral

Dial-A-Law (recorded services 24 hrs/day). 902-420-1888

Family Law Information Program (FLIP)
Halifax. 902-424-5232
Sydney 902-563-5761

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia 902-454-2198
legalinfo.org

Info Line & Lawyer Referral Service . 902-455-3135, Toll-free 1-800-665-9779

Maintenance and Child Support

Federal Child Support Guidelines . . . . . Toll-free 1-888-373-2222

Maintenance Enforcement Program
Head Office 902-424-0050
InfoLine (24-hour access) . . . . . Toll-free 1-800-357-9248
novascotia.ca/just/mep

LGBTQ

Egale Canada ..... Toll-free 1-888-204-7777
egale.ca

Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual Youth Project 902-429-5429
youthproject.ns.ca

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project 902-444-3206
nsrap.ca

PFLAG Canada Ltd. ..... Toll-free 1-888-530-6777
pflagcanada.ca

Pride Cape Breton
pridecapebreton.ca

Men's Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs

Amherst/Cumberland County
New Directions 902-667-1344

Bridgewater/Lunenburg and Queens Counties
Alternatives 902-543-7444

Halifax
New Start Counselling 902-423-4675

Sydney/Cape Breton Island
Second Chance 902-567-0979
..... Toll-free 1-855-567-0979

Truro/Colchester and East Hants counties
Bridges 902- 897-6665

Westville/New Glasgow, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough counties
New Leaf 902-396-2440

Mental Health

Emergency/Crisis Services ..... dial 911

Mental Health Crisis Line (24/7) 1-888-429-8167

Canadian Mental Health (CMHA)
NS Division..... 902-466-6600
.....Toll-free 1-877-466-6606
novascotia.cmha.ca

HealthLink.....dial 811
For the hearing impaired.....dial 711
811.novascotia.ca

Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia (SSNS)..... 902-465-2601
.....Toll-free 1-800-465-2601
openpockets.com/SSNS

Mental Health Services

Central Health Authority
Capital District Health Authority
Child/Adolescent Mental Health Program 902-464-4110
NS Hospital 902-464-3111
IWK Health Centre Community Mental Health..... 902-422-1611
IWK's Central Referral Service..... 902-464-4110
.....Toll-free 1-888-470-5888
CMHA. 902-455-5445
cmhahaldart.ca
Community Mental Health Dartmouth..... 902-466-1830
Empowerment Connection..... 902-404-3445
Healthy Minds Cooperative 902-404-3504
healthyminds.ca
Laing House..... 902-425-6943
lainghouse.org
SSNS HRM Chapter..... 902-462-8658
ssnsc.blogspot.ca/p/hrm-chapter.html
Self-Help Connection..... 902-466-2011
selfhelpconnection.ca
Women's Health Community Clinic 902-470-6755

Eastern Health Authority

Cape Breton Health Authority
- Adult Outpatient Services 902-567-7731
- Child/Adolescent Services 902-567-7730
- Emergency Crisis Services 902-567-7767

CMHA Cape Breton 902-567-7735

Northern Health Authority

Colchester East Hants
- Mental Health and Addiction Services 902-893-5526
- . . . . . Toll-free 1-800-460-2110 ext. 45526

Cumberland
- Cumberland Health Authority 902-661-1090
  - cha.nshealth.ca
- Cumberland Mental Health Services 902-667-3879
  - cha.nshealth.ca/mentalhealth

Pictou County Health Authority
- New Glasgow: Aberdeen Mental Health Services
  - 8:30am-4:30pm 902-755-1137
  - after hours 902-752-8311
  - pcha.nshealth.ca/mentalhealthservices/is.htm
- New Glasgow CMHA 902-752-5578

Western Health Authority

Annapolis Mental Health Services 902- 825-4825

CMHA King's County 902-679-7464

King's County Mental Health Services 902-679-2870
- Children & Youth 902-679-2873

Queen's County
- South Shore Health Authority
- Mental Health Services 902-527-5228
- CMHA Lunenburg County Branch 902-521-0994
- Bridgewater Mental Health Services 902-543-7082
- Directory of Agencies and Services 143

South West Nova District Health Authority
- Digby Mental Health Services 902-245-4709
- Shelburne Mental Health Clinic 902-875-4200
- Yarmouth Mental Health Clinic 902-742-4222
- CMHA Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne Branch: cmhayds.com

Strait Health Authority Mental Health Services
- Guysborough and Antigonish . . . . . 902-867-4500, ext. 4760

Mi'kmaq Services

Provincial

Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network ..... Toll-free 1-877-379-2042
mlsn.ca
Dartmouth 902-468-0381
Eskasoni 902-379-2042
Truro 902-895-1141

Native Council of Nova Scotia 902-895-1738
ncns.ca

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association 902-893-7402
Child Help Initiative Project
ncns.ca/programs-services/child-help-initiative-program-chip
Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou, Guysborough, Antigonish, Halifax and
Hants Counties 1-902-895-1738
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-4372
Cape Breton, Richmond and Victoria Counties 1-902-567-1240
Kings, Queens, Lunenburg, Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne Counties 1-902-354-2751

Halifax

Micmac Native Friendship Centre 902-420-1576

Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre 902-422-7850

Truro

Native Social Counselling Agency 902-895-1738

Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter 902-895-1738
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-4372

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services

Eskasoni 902-379-2433
..... Toll-free 1-800-263-8300

Indianbrook 902-758-3553
..... Toll-free 1-800-263-8686

Shubenacadie 902-758-3553

Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centres

Millbrook First Nation: Truro 902-893-8483
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-4741

Waycobah First Nation: Whycocomagh 902-756-3440
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-3440

Policing

Mainland First Nations Communities

RCMP Operational Communications Centre (OCC) 1-800-272-9674
Cape Breton – Membourtou 902-563-5151
Police and RCMP – Emergency 911

Please see the blue pages in your phone book for non-emergency police and the white pages for RCMP numbers (listed under Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in your area. Many RCMP detachments and police departments offer victims' services or victims' assistance programs to help you. Ask if these services are available to you.

RCMP

rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/ns
General inquiries..... 902-720-5000
Non Emergency 1-800-803-7267
..... TDD 902-426-7554
Find your local detachment: rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ns/detach/index-eng.htm

Second Stage Housing

Second stage housing offers safe and affordable housing for abused women and their children. You can also contact through your local transition house.

Antigonish: Naomi Society..... 902-863-3807
naomisociety.ca

Halifax: Alice Housing..... 902-466-8459
alicehousing.ca

Sydney: Cape Breton Transition House..... 902-562-3045

Truro: Welkaqnik Next Step Shelter (priority to Aboriginal women)
..... 902-895-1738
.....Toll-free 1-800-565-4372
ncns.ca/programs-services/welkaqnik-next-step-shelter

Senior Women

Provincial Senior Abuse Line

8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday to Friday (except holidays)
Toll-free in Nova Scotia 1-877-833-3377
Out of province 902-424-3163

Nova Scotia Senior Safety Programs

novascotia.ca/seniors/senior_Safety_Programs.asp

Annapolis County 902-665-4481
Antigonish Town and County 902-863-6500
Bridgewater 902-543-3567
Cape Breton Regional Municipality 902-563-5351
Cumberland County .....
902-667-7484 .....
Halifax 902-490-2554
halifax.ca/police/SHSP.php
Hants 902-798-9601
seniorsafetyprogram.ca
Kings County .....
902-375-3602 .....
Lunenburg County, Bridgewater .....
902-543-3567 .....
Pictou 902-755-2886
Shelburne County
..... 902-637-2015
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-0397
ourseniorservices.com
Yarmouth County 902-881-7107

RCMP Seniors' Safety Programs

Annapolis County ..... 902-665-4481 / 902-825-2000 / 902-638-8825
Antigonish 902-863-6500
Cole Harbour 902-244-7208
Digby 902-245-2579
Enfield 902-883-7077
Meteghan 902-645-2326
Pictou 902-863-6500
Queens County 902-350-0231

Seniors Mental Health Program / Capital Health

Dartmouth 902-464-3310
Halifax 902-473-7799

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Halifax: IWK Health Centre

Women's Clinic 902- 470-8888
iwk.nshealth.ca/women-and-newborns-health/services/womens-health

Women's Health Community Clinics 902-470-6755

Sexual Health Centres

Amherst: Sexual Health Centre for Cumberland County 902-667-7500
amherstsexualhealth.ca

Bridgewater: Sexual Health Centre, Lunenburg County 902-527-2868
sexualhealthlunenburg.com

Halifax: Halifax Sexual Health Centre 902-455-9656
hshc.ca

Kentville: The Red Door Youth Health & Support Centre (for youth 13-30)
. 902-679-1411
thereddoor.ca

New Glasgow: Pictou County Centre for Sexual Health 902-695-3366

Sheet Harbour: Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre 902-885-2789
sexualhealthsheetharbour.com

Sydney: Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health. 902-539-5158

Sexual Assault Centres

Antigonish: Antigonish Women's Resource Centre& Sexual Assault Services Association 902.863.6221
awrcsasa.ca

Halifax: Avalon Sexual Assault Centre 902-422-4240
Crisis Line 902-425-0122
avaloncentre.ca

Truro: Colchester Sexual Assault Centre 902-897-4366
colchestersac.ca

Support/Referral/Advocacy Organizations

Dartmouth: Self Help Connection 902-466-2011
..... Toll-free 1-866-765-6639

Halifax: YWCA 902-423-6162

New Glasgow: Pictou County YM/YWCA 902-752-0202

Transition Houses

Transition houses offer emergency shelter, information, and support for women in abusive relationships. For more information on services call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia. 902-429-7287

Amherst: Autumn House (Wheelchair accessible) (will accept collect calls)
24 hour crisis line 902-667-1200
Office. 902-667-1344
autumnhouse.ca

Antigonish: Naomi Society, Office/Crisis 902-863-3807
naomisociety.ca

Bridgewater: Harbour House (Wheelchair accessible)
Crisis line . . . . . .
902-543-3999. . . . . .
Office 902-543-3665
Outreach 902-543-9970
. . . . . Toll-free 1-888-543-3999
harbour-house.ca

Digby: Juniper Outreach 902-245-4789
. . . . . Toll-free 1-800-266-4087
Crisis line. 902-742-8689
juniperhouse.ca

Halifax

Adsum House (For homeless women and children) 902-423-4443
adsumforwomen.org

Barry House 902-422-8324

Bryony House (Wheelchair ramp, one room accessible, accessible bathroom, bilingual staff as required)
24 hr Crisis line 902-422-7650
Office 902-429-9002
Outreach 902-429-9003
bryonyhouse.ca

Kentville: Chrysalis House (Two bilingual staff, wheelchair ramp, one large room, bathroom accessible)

Crisis line 902-679-1922
Office 902-679-6544
Outreach 902-679-8324
..... Toll-free 1-800-264-8682
chrysalishouseassociation.org

New Glasgow: Tearmann House (Wheelchair ramp, main floor accessible)

Crisis line 902-752-0132
Office 902-928-0774
Outreach 902-752-2591
..... Toll-free 1-888-831-0330

Port Hawkesbury: Leeside Transition House (Wheelchair accessible)

Crisis line 902-625-2444
Office/Outreach 902-625-1990
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-3390

Sydney: Cape Breton Transition House (Wheelchair lift, bilingual staff as required)

Crisis line 902-539-2945
..... Toll-free 1-800-563-2945
Office 902-562-3864
Outreach Program 902-562-3045,
Children's Services 902-562-1336

Truro: Third Place (Wheelchair ramp, one room, partial bath, and common areas accessible)

Crisis line 902-893-3232
Office 902-893-4844
Outreach 902-895-9740
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-4878
thirdplaceth.ca

Yarmouth: Juniper House

Crisis line 902-742-8689
Office 902-742-4473
Outreach 902-742-0231
..... Toll-free 1-800-266-4087
juniperhouse.ca

Victim Services

Provincial Victim Services

Provincial Victim Services provides information and confidential support services to victims of crime and their families. Your local RCMP detachment, police department, or transition house can also provide support and assistance.

Department of Justice Victim Services

novascotia.ca/just/victim_services

Head Office: Halifax 902- 424-3309
..... Toll-free 1-888-470-0773

Annapolis, Kings, Hants, Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, and Yarmouth counties: Kentville 902-679-6201
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-1805

Cape Breton, Richmond, Inverness, and Victoria counties: Sydney
..... 902-563-3655
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-0071

Halifax Regional Municipality: Dartmouth 902-424-3307

Pictou, Guysborough, Antigonish, Colchester, and Cumberland counties: New Glasgow 902-755-7110
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-7912

Police-Based Victim Services

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services Unit 902-490-5300
TexT 902-497-4709

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

PO Box 745, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T3
Phone 902-424-8662
..... Toll-free 1-800-565-8662
Fax 902-424-0573
E-mail ..... women@novascotia.ca
women.gov.ns.ca

Women's Centres

Provincial

Women's Centres Connect Nova Scotia Association of Women's Centres
womenconnect.ca

Annapolis: The Women's Place Resource Centre
902-532-1898
Toll-free 1-877-392-8800
womensplaceresourcecenter.com

Antigonish: Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
902-863-6221
awrcsasa.ca

Halifax

Saint Mary's University Women's Centre 902-496-8722
South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre 902-494-2432
southhousehalifax.ca

Lunenburg: Second Story Women's Centre. . . . . 902-543-1315 / 902-640-3044
secstory.com

New Glasgow: Pictou County Women's Resource & Sexual Assault Centre
902-755-4647
womenscentre.ca

Port Hawksbury: Strait Area Women's Place 902-625-1614

Sheet Harbour: LEA Place Women's Centre 902-885-2668
leaplace.com

Sydney: Every Woman's Centre 902-567-1212

Truro: Central Nova Women's Resource Centre 902-895-4295
cnwrc.weebly.com

Wolfville: Acadia University Women's Centre 902-585-2140
pslacadia.ca/womenscentre.html

Yarmouth: TRI County Women's Centre 902-742-0085
Toll-free 1-877-742-0085
tricountywomenscentre.org

Women with Disabilities

Disabled Persons Commission
Halifax (provincial) 902-424-8280
..... Toll-free (NS) 1-800-565-8280
.....TTY 902-424-2667
.....Toll-free/TTY (NS) 1-877-996-9954
disability.novascotia.ca

Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities 902-455-6942
.....Toll-free 1-866-696-7536
novascotialeo.org

reachability
.....Phone/TTY 902-429-5878
.....Toll-free/TTY 1-866-429-5878

Caregivers Nova Scotia 902-421-7390
.....Toll-free 1-877-488-7390
caregiversns.org

DisAbled Women's Network Canada..... Toll-free (Canada) 1-866-396-0074
dawncanada.net

Additional Resources

Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children
Provides information, research, online training, and resources about domestic violence.
learningtoendabuse.ca

Government of Nova Scotia's Cyberbullying Task Force
antibullying.novascotia.ca

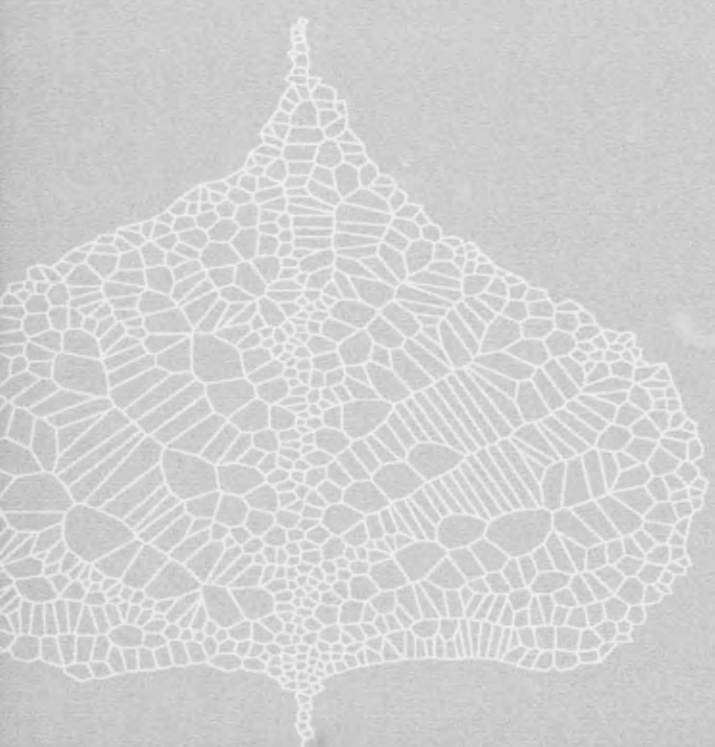
Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia
Provides information about the law in this province.
legalinfo.org

National Information Center on Health Services
Research and Health Care Technology (NICHSR) of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) has released a new health services research resource on domestic violence.
infodocket.com/2015/09/27/reference-national-library-of-medicine-releases-new-research-resource-for-domestic-violence/

Neighbours, Friends and Families
A public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help.
neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Provides information about the issue of domestic violence.
women.gov.ns.ca/freedom-from-violence

Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Resource Centre Asset-Map
An electronic asset-map of available support services for women experiencing domestic violence, and those offering support, in Nova Scotia.
nsdomesticviolence.ca/help-in-my-community

Public Health Agency of Canada
Operates the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV). The NCFV is Canada's resource centre for information on violence within relationships of kinship, intimacy, dependency or trust. Information is available in both English and French.
phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/index-eng.php

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia
Member organizations provide crisis and transitional services to women and their children. You can locate a shelter and other resources through this site.
thans.ca/get-help/find-a-shelter